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ABSTRACT

The articles in this journal issue (1) discuss involving students in various language arts activities that have peace as a theme, and (2) deal with literature for students from kindergarten through grade 12. Topics in the first part are as follows: peace education in the English classroom, the peaceful hero, understanding the language of peace, war and peace in children's literature, and great English teaching ideas. The topics in the second part deal with teaching the nineteenth century novel in installments, capturing student's responses to literature through journals, experiencing stories for the deaf, celebrating southern voices in children's literature, narrative structure as a tool for discovering theme, and teaching poems written by Jim Harrison. The third part of this issue includes book reviews, a description of the NCTE 1986 achievement awards in writing, an article on the neglect of oral language, two ERIC/RCS articles (on phonics and on teaching thinking skills in the English language arts), and two essays--one on the negative effects of using writing as punishment and one on the need to decrease class size. The last item is a statement of current trends and issues in language arts, as seen by the commissions and standing committees of the National Council of Teachers of English. (EL)

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Virginia English Bulletin

Achieving Peace and Literature for Students

Virginia Association of Teachers of English

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THE VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF
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Congratulations to
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Foster Gresham Award
For Excellence in Teaching English Language Arts

Two Stacks Later: Journeys — Literature, Peace, and Final Remarks

Alan M. McLeod

The English classroom is a place for questioning, reflecting, probing concerns of the human condition. Literature probes the human condition and in the process reveals values to be accepted or rejected. Reading literature, listening to news on radio or television, viewing films, and then discussing or writing my thoughts helps me discover more about who I am and what I believe; such discussing or writing helps me map my personal journey within the human condition.

Several years ago, I was asked along with others to comment in VATE's Sixtieth Anniversary issue of the *Virginia English Bulletin* (1974) on the issue of humanism vs. accountability. I wrote rather long-windedly:

> Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln never studied English as we know it, yet they had the capability to use language effectively to construct great statements about the rights of persons. Richard Nixon and John Ehrlichman are unquestionably products of the teaching of English much as we know it, yet their language has been employed in a manner so significantly different from a Jefferson or a Lincoln that Ron Ziegler was compelled to tell the American public on more than one occasion that a statement by their president was "no longer operative. . . ."
>
> As teachers we can be both accountable for and humane in the language we teach . . ., explore how language influences our lives through semantics, dialects, and the use of words. . . helping our students develop problem-solving capacities, the ability to think through the implications of what they do. . . . Attention to the influence of language on our lives may well preclude future Watergates, lessen the need for women and minorities to demand that the use of language reflect their personhood, and even free us from having Madison Avenue prey upon our credulity. Language, the basis of formulating and conveying values, demands both humanism and accountability, and so must the teaching of that language.

Achieving peace is one of the journeys of the human condition, a concern for which we all must be held accountable. To achieve peace, we have to work at it. That includes the language we use. Language, whether spoken or written, shapes values, attitudes, perspectives. Yet language is also used seductively.

Not long before I selected peace as a theme for this issue, I became agitated over the seductive nature of language. I listened to a district representative to the United States Congress discuss his perspective on disarmament. While there were several statements with which I disagreed, I was struck with the language he used. I found it especially incongruous

that he commented we need more advanced weapons to threaten the enemy so we may maintain peace. What kind of word is *threaten*? When we use such words are we promoting peaceful or belligerent attitudes? How can we ever hope for peace, naive as that may be, if our governmental leaders use bellicose language in the name of establishing peace?

What is our responsibility in the classroom to help students examine the influence of language? Where do we help them develop thinking skills? Do we have a responsibility to help them develop value systems that respect others? Should we assist students, for example, in achieving conflict resolution abilities? Should we look at proportionate opportunities to cooperate as well as compete in our classes? Are there works of literature which reflect positive, respectful family relationships, community relations? Literature which reveals causes of conflict, writing assignments that permit exploration of one's values? What do we *do* on a daily basis to promote or discourage resolution of conflict? Isn't peace as much a process as it is an "end product"?

Those are troublesome questions for me personally because in answering them I become entangled in personal perspectives and "political" values. I don't have the answer, but I am convinced that we have a responsibility to examine language and its use if we are ever to reduce prejudice and human conflict or to preclude demeaning others by the words we use. Thus humanism and accountability fuse in issues such as achieving peace; they are inseparable. We offer in this issue of the *Bulletin* a few "bridges" connecting accountability with human concerns in the journey toward peace.

* * * * * *

Final Remarks

A decade has passed since I initiated this column during our nation's bicentennial year, my first year as an editor. (I am reminded how long a journey that has been when I realize my daughter, now a first-year college student, was then in the third grade.) I noted that the column title "refers to the eternal lamentation of the teacher of English — so much to evaluate, so little time in which to do it." That lamentation has not changed much.

The most significant development in the teaching of English in the last ten years is undoubtedly attention to writing as a process. The Bay Area Writing Project grew into the National and now International Writing Project, with seven sites in Virginia. Writing as a way of learning and writing across the curriculum have received considerable attention; in Virginia the Department of Education is in the midst of a statewide language across the curriculum project. Attention also has been given to demonstration of learning; particular emphasis in Virginia is found in the Standards of Learning program; and there is presently a renewed emphasis on excellence.

Other developments, equally important although not receiving as much attention, have generally been extensions from prior decades. In literature

more attention has been given to reader response and to recognizing that young people may not have lived long enough to have experiences desirable in understanding certain literary works at the time they read them. While "young adult" literature may be coming of age from the pens of such writers as Cormier, Bridgers, and Westall, censorship has increased and "back to the basics," including classics, has raged. The English classroom is no sinecure, for we live and work in a world governed by politics and influence seekers.

Renewed attention has been given to language study, although much of it still seems to focus on that which pays low dividends — syntactical analysis and nomenclature identification — rather than on usage, semantics, and a sense of language development. Schools have been criticized by national commissions, college curricula are under attack, and the quality of teachers and prospective teachers called into question. Broad brush strokes have tainted nearly all associated with education because well meaning individuals and groups in their frustration have sought simplistic answers to complex questions

Through the years *VEB* has tried not only to reflect current concerns and practices but also to anticipate new directions in its journey. That was true under my predecessors as editor (Fred Carpenter, 1951; Foster Gresham, 1952-59; Rinaldo Simonini, 1960-65; Frances Wimer, 1966-1976); and, during my tenure we have sought to maintain a similar balance.

My final column is particularly long for there are numerous individuals who have earned my profound gratitude for sharing this journey with me. I have been aided greatly by the Editorial Board, a roll call of some of VATE's outstanding leaders (Sarah Belpree Dandridge, Roger Bergstrom, Bill Horst, Douglas Fowler, Helen Waid, Ann Bailey Fuqua, Atalissa Gilfoyle, Bill Griffin, Berthenia Taylor, Richard Meade, Isabelle Pillow, Bill Goggin, Mark Gulesian, Anamae Hill, Eileen Ford, Carolyn Hinson, Marian Mohr, Jacquelyn Bryant, Helen Kelley, Paul Slayton, Beth Boone, Sharon Harris, Daisy Reed, Charlotte Sellers, Pat Duncan, Ellen Griffin, Bob Small, Pat Kelly, Leila Christenbury, Irene Caperton, Louise Patterson, and Herb Thompson); by the Publications Committee, most ably chaired by Warren Self; by business managers Foster Gresham, Patricia Kelly, John Oehler, and Ray VanDyke; by consulting, department, associate, and guest editors Bob Small, Pat Kelly, Leila Christenbury, Frances Wimer, Beth Boone, and others; by Executive Secretaries Foster Gresham and Leon Williams; and by VATE presidents Bill Grey, Bill Bosher, Tom Callahan, Bill Horst, Pat Kelly, Betty Swiggett, Ann Kuhta, Judy Self, and Jackie Bryant.

Our themes or focus topics since 1976 reflect much of what has occupied the attention of English teachers and English educators:

The Bicentennial and the Teaching of English
Issues and Concerns in English Language Arts (twice)
Student Writing
What's Beyond Minimal Competencies
Stimulus, Strategy, Response: Purposeful Writing

English in the International Year of the Child
What's Happening in Virginia's English Classrooms?
What I Wish I'd Known When I Started Teaching:
Student Writing is Alive!
Developing Lifelong Readers
Teaching Exceptional Students
Making Effective Assignments
Books Still Worth Reading
Computers in Language Arts
Evaluation and Oral Communication Literature and Its Teaching
What We Have Learned About the Teaching of Writing

Nearly every issue has been incorporated in the ERIC system and one, "Developing Lifelong Readers" (Leila Christenbury, guest editor), was adopted by NCTE for further distribution. The *Bulletin*'s pages have been honored by the writing of such well-known educators as Ken Donelson, Ted Hipple, Bob Shuman, Bob Small, by Virginians and non-Virginians alike, and by those "in the trenches" — the teachers, K-12, who made the time to write about their endeavors, what worked well for them, and their concerns.

I reflect on these past years with considerable awe, a sense of pride, and absolute appreciation for those individuals who helped make the journey worthwhile — authors, editorial boards and editors of different titles, letter writers, the VATE Executive Boards, the readers, and the population with which we are most concerned — the young people generally between the ages of 5 and 19. The journey would not have been possible either had it not been for the support of my wife and daughter, Dardi and Sarah; for the understanding exhibited by my colleagues—deans Chuck Ruch and John Oehler, division heads Dick Vacca and Pat Duncan; and for the example of my professional mentor, Dick Meade.

With this issue I pass one of two stacks of papers to the very capable hands of Pat Kelly and Bob Small. I could not be more pleased at the choice of successors. Pat and Bob are exceptional individuals with considerable experience in teaching English and extensive experience not only as writers themselves but as editors. *Bulletin* readers may recall that for nearly eight years Bob edited the "Great English Teaching Ideas Column," that Pat served as guest editor for one issue, and that Bob and Pat served as guest editors for last spring's focus on what we've learned about the teaching of writing. The *Bulletin* will flourish under their wisdom and ingenuity. Even though I have often felt inadequate to the task, I trust they will find as much happiness and satisfaction as I have in the endeavor. I wish them and you a most profitable journey together.

Peace Education in the English Classroom

Ruth K. J. Cline

The word *peace* is used often in our vocabulary, but I found it very difficult to define. The dictionary defines it as "a state of tranquility or quiet" and "a pact or agreement to end hostilities between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity." Is that what we mean when we talk about "the peacekeeper," the nuclear weapon? Or when we think about police as "keeping the peace," while protesters "disturb the peace?" What do we mean by "peace of mind" or "inner peace?" Teachers may request that their students give them "peace and quiet." The word is complex and it has many images.

Does the study of peace belong in the classroom? How should it be handled? How can we make it anything but a vague, ambiguous word for our students? What are some of the obstacles to peace?

I propose the use of young adult literature as a vehicle for discussing peace in the English classroom, with questions and activities to help the concept become more concrete for our students.

Rationale

Since the word *peace* is used in so many ways, we need to understand our goals for including it in the curriculum. One goal would be to create positive visual images of peace. If war is presented as heroic, funny (*Mash*), courageous, and full of excitement, what images do we have of peace? Doves, fields of flowers, and soft music may not conjure up the images that are challenging to young people. Peace may seem boring.

Another goal would be to make peace seem both desirable and attainable. When suffering and oppression in the world are viewed on television or discussed at length in the newspaper, for instance, our students should be helped to feel they can do something to change conditions. They become committed to living more peaceful lives in a peaceful world.

Peace should be presented as something we experience on several levels and in many areas of our lives. On a personal level, we may recall a sense of inner peace, inspiration, or even exhilaration. On an interpersonal level, moments of celebrating, giving and receiving, and shared feelings can create a feeling of peace. In our classrooms, churches, or communities, we can rejoice in the times when cooperation, unity and common purpose win

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out over competition and distrust. National and international examples may seem more rare, but signing treaties, finding areas of agreement, focusing on a world-wide accomplishment (i.e., successful space missions, or celebrating the unity of the Olympic games) can all lead to the power and oneness of peace.

Peace is not just an endpoint. It is a process. Sometimes the process includes pain, misery, struggle, and conflict. This is true for the individual seeking personal peace as well as the striving of the nation and world toward peace. Can we help our students keep this vision of the result, even through the pain of the process?

Peace cannot be simply the absence of violence, since a repressive society could be nonviolent and yet far from enjoying a state of peace. Society is changing constantly, the result of conflict, creativity, disagreement or growth. This suggests we cannot associate peace solely with calm, quiet and passivity. How can we help our students distinguish between destructive and constructive conflict?

Literature

Literature can help us think about the causes of dissension between people and nations. One of these causes is prejudice. There are many young adult books which present positive images of minorities. Mildred Taylor's book, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* and Ouida Sebestyen's *Words By Heart* present strong young black girls who are faced with violence but show remarkable courage. Bette Greene's *Summer of My German Soldier* makes us aware of both the Jewish and German prejudices in America during World War II. How did the heroine in each of these novels cope with prejudice? How can we keep such situations from recurring?

The Road from Home: The Story of an Armenian Girl by David Kherdian shows a different prejudice. The Armenians are being driven out of Turkey during the 1920's. The inhumanity of one people towards another is so vivid, and yet the degree of suffering is hard for any of us today to comprehend. What other ethnic groups have been or are being displaced? With what results?

What are the effects of dehumanizing the enemy? Some of the literature pictures the enemy as being just like us, with feelings and physical needs. Does this change our attitude about fighting them? In *The Man He Killed*, Thomas Hardy said,

> Yes; quaint and curious war is!
> You shoot a fellow down
> You'd treat if met where any bar is,
> Or help to half-a-crown.

Ceremony of Innocence by James Forman gives us some insight into the Germans who were not pleased with the direction Hitler was taking the country and what happened when they protested. It is a view of Germany that we have heard little about. "The enemy" in that book is not one fully

committed nation. Compare that resistance with the protests in our country against the Vietnam war. What did each accomplish?

In Harry Mazer's *The Last Mission*, Jack Raab is only 15 years old when he uses a false identification and joins World War II. As a young man, idealistic about war and bravery, he changes through his personal experiences to a cynical view of war. The reality of the death of his entire airplane crew in a crash over enemy territory, including his best friend Chuck, and then having to tell Chuck's parents, makes Jack see the stupidity of war. Asked to talk to an assembly at his high school, Jack says,

> I don't like war. I thought I'd like it before. But war is stupid. I saw my best friend killed. His name was Chuckie O'Brien. My whole crew was killed. . . . A lot of people were killed. Millions of people. Ordinary people. Not only by Hitler. Not only on our side. War isn't like the movies. It's not fun and songs. It's not about heroes. It's about awful, sad things, like my friend Chuckie that I'm not ever going to see again. I hope war never happens again. That's all I've got to say. (p. 182)

After reading this book, the students could interview war veterans to discover their current attitude toward war and whether or not it has changed since they entered the service.

Two other books that present a grim picture of war and its devastating consequences on innocent people are *On the Other Side of the Gate* by Yuri Suhl and *Dark Hour of Noon* by Christine Szambelan-Strevinsky. In Suhl's book, Hanna is only eight when she is forced to see the atrocities against her townspeople in Poland, and she and some of her friends vow vengeance. They make weapons and stalk the Germans who were guilty, killing them eventually. The loss of innocence for a gang of children comes at an early age. The deeds are performed in a matter of fact way, resulting in horror and gripping suspense. Ask your students to watch TV or read the newspapers to see the involvement of young children today in battles in South America or South Africa. What effect might this have on them and their future?

On the Other Side of the Gate, set in Poland in WW II, relates the practice of Jews giving their children to others to raise because the Jews were not allowed to have babies. David, one and a half years old, is hidden in a water barrel and the barrel is exchanged at the town pump, allowing David to grow up in the home of a Christian Pole. The ingenuity and courage of these people is admirable. What short-term and long-range effects might these children experience?

As you can see, it is much easier to find books that deal with war and violence. Two other books that are quite different are *The Sit-In Game* by Doris Dahlin and *The Runner* by Cynthia Voigt. In *The Sit-In Game* a group of high school students in Sweden staged a sit-in because they didn't feel their school was intellectually honest, their grades were deceiving, and learning was rote and not meaningful. Each chapter is a different student's impression of what happened. Their idealistic and innocent gesture turned into violence and destruction, and they were forced to accept the

consequences of their actions. Students could write what they think the results of such an action might be in their location.

A 1985 book by Cynthia Voigt, *The Runner*, is the internal struggle of seventeen-year-old Bullet. Set in 1967, we meet a boy trying to find his place in a continual battle with his father. Bullet also does not see the world in the same way as his classmates. But he has learned he can release many of his frustrations through his cross-country running. The day he turns eighteen, he enlists in the Vietnam War. Bullet was seeking his own solutions to his personal problems and the world's problems. What choices do students have today? Would they have acted as Bullet did?

Conclusion

There are certainly many other books that could be cited. The point is that there are books written for young adults and about people their own age who had to confront decisions of life and death, war and peace. Teachers could use these books to present a balanced view of violence and to provoke discussions about whether or not it is ever appropriate. The role of prejudice in misunderstandings cannot be minimized. The efforts to use propaganda, to define the enemy, and to pinpoint the specific dangers in each instance can lead young people to a better understanding of conflict and how we can resolve it.

So what is peace? We have looked at some situations which were not peaceful and tried to understand what was involved in each of them. Perhaps by studying these and discussing them, young people will find their own answers to this crucial question.

Young Adult Literature

Dahlin, Doris. *The Sit-in Game*, translated from Swedish by Joan Late. Viking Press, 1974.

Forman, James. *Ceremony of Innocence*. Dell, 1970.

Kherdian, David. *The Road from Home: The Story of an Armenian Girl*. Greenwillow Books, NY, 1979.

Mazer, Harry. *The Last Mission*. Delacorte Press, NY, 1979.

Suhl, Yuri. *On the Other Side of the Gate*. Franklin Watts, Inc., NY, 1975.

Szambelan-Strevinsky, Christine. *Dark Hour of Noon*. Lippincott, NY, 1982.

Voigt, Cynthia. *The Runner*. Atheneum, NY, 1985.

Further Reading for the Teacher

Dougall, Lucy. *War and Peace in Literature: Prose, Drama and Poetry which Illuminate the Problem of War*. World Without War Publications, Chicago, 1982 (ED 245 960).

Education for Peace Organization. *Resource Guide for Teachers and Community Workers*. 1983, Ottawa, Canada (ED 247 188).

Educators for Social Responsibility. *Perspectives: A Teaching Guide to Concepts of Peace*, September 1983, Cambridge, Mass. (ED 240 023).

Fassler, Joan, and Marjorie Graham Janis. "Books, Children, and Peace," *Young Children*, September 1983, (Vol. 38, no. 6), pp. 21-30.

Federman, Joel. *Toward a World Peace Movement*. 1983 (ED 237 403).

Greiner, Rosmarie. *Peace Education: A Biography Focusing on Young Children.* 1983 (ED 244 868).

Hahn, Carole L. *Teaching Controversial Issues: The Case of Peace and Security.* June 1984 (ED 247 162).

Student Literary Magazines Gain Honors in NCTE's New National Competition

Outstanding student literary magazines from senior high, junior high, and middle schools in the U.S., Canada and the Virgin Islands have been recognized by the National Council of Teachers of English. Names of twenty schools whose magazines earned "Highest Award" status, as well as names of schools whose magazines were rated "Superior," "Excellent," and "Above Average" by judging teams, appear in a booklet mailed to schools which took part in this new NCTE competition.

The student magazines were rated on the basis of their literary quality (50 percent of a magazine's score), types of writing included, quality of editing and graphic design, and student involvement in production.

Highest Awards for 1984 went to twenty schools in fourteen states. Their magazines were cited as tops among the 44 school literary magazines which earned "Superior" ratings from state contest judges. Highest Award-winning magazines included *Symposium,* West Springfield High School, Springfield, Virginia.

In the 1984 competition, 304 school magazines were rated "Excellent" by the judges; 290 received ratings of "Above Average."

Judges in the state competitions for student magazines are appointed by state leaders who coordinate the competition at the state level. "Highest Awards" are made on the basis of a second judging.

The 1985 Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines, now underway, will be supported by Scott, Foresman and Company. The deadline for submitting magazines to state leaders for judging was September 10.

(For details of the competition and names and addresses of state leaders write the Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines, National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801. Phone: 217-328-3870.)

The Peaceful Hero

Charlotte G. Morgan

Adolescents are interested in war (Dolde, 52), but many are equally concerned about peace, viewing it as the potential hope for the survival of their nuclear-haunted world.

The concept of hero is familiar to all high school students. "For several centuries, a hero has been considered a man of physical or moral courage, admired for bravery and noble deeds" (Shaw, 182). Frequently, bravery is portrayed as deeds performed in the arena of war, destroying the enemy. In classical studies, Odysseus and Achilles are both admired for their prowess in battle. In American studies, George Washington is first viewed as the heroic general. While the portrait of the peaceful hero is perhaps not as clearly defined or as frequently studied, many students have been exposed to models. These figures are brave and courageous like their warring counterparts, but they struggle to serve mankind without wielding swords or rifle. Abraham Lincoln, though commander-in-chief of the Union Forces, wanted nothing less than freedom for the oppressed and the end of conflict. Martin Luther King's non-violent life was dedicated to overcoming racial inequality.

The definition of hero implies service to mankind; literary study may point out for students that this service need not be participation in battle itself. Rather, the peaceful hero may provide a model for noble service without destruction.

Paul Gallico's fictional "legend," *The Snow Goose,* centers around such a peaceful protagonist. Philip Rhayader, deformed and crippled, uses his skill as a sailor to rescue Allied soldiers stranded on the beaches at Dunkirk. He never burned a draft card or marched in a peace rally, yet his life itself advocates peace.

Rhayader lives a solitary existence as a painter and befriender of wildlife. He occupies an abandoned lighthouse off the coast of Essex, where he sets up a sanctuary for geese and widgeon and teal, refusing to permit hunters to shoot there. An artist of considerable skill, he uses the winter months while his birds are migrating to paint canvasses of his surroundings. Though his isolation from society does not completely fulfill him, he finds it preferable to the stares and alienation he feels when he must go to town for supplies. Students, as they read and discuss his solitary lifestyle, may come to the conclusion that inner peace requires coming to terms with certain realities, not necessarily attaining total satisfaction. Indeed they may discern that living life as a pacifist requires courage and inner resources.

Charlotte Morgan teaches at New Community School in Richmond, Virginia.

Rhayader is a surprisingly powerful man. He sails his small boat for days at a time, often using his crippled hand and his teeth to manage the sails. It is apparent here, that peace is not necessarily the product of fear or weakness, but may be a choice of the strong.

Obviously Rhayader is an advocate of freedom. The wounded snow goose he heals and nurtures chooses when to come and go, and in the end freely decides to stay with the lighthouse-keeper rather than migrate. This parallels Rhayader's relationship with Frith, the girl from the fishing village who grows to love him in spite of his grotesque physical form. Only when she chooses to come to him freely does he reveal his mature love for her. While peace precludes harming others, it also means permitting them the freedom of their choices and decisions.

Rhayader leaves his santuary and goes to Dunkirk not because he is required to, but because he chooses to. As he explains to Frith, "Men are huddled on the beaches like hunted birds, Frith, like the wounded and hunted birds we used to find and bring to sanctuary. . .They need help, my dear, as our wild creatures have needed help, and that is why I must go" (Gallico, 37). Even though Rhayader lives a peace-loving life and establishes a domain free from the pressures of society, he cannot ignore the needs of his fellow man. Peace, then, is not a promise of safety, nor is it a door closed on the needs of others.

Gallico portrays Rhayader's death as a final peace, a transcendence of physical limitations and the cruelties of war. The goose's return flight to Frith, signifying that Rhayader will come back, conveys his lasting nobility and beauty.

Study of this brief story that Paul Gallico contrived in response to the civilian evacuation of soldiers at Dunkirk generates numerous opportunities for the discussion of peace and heroism. I begin the study of *The Snow Goose* with a brief research assignment, directing students to find out what happened at Dunkirk, France, between the end of May and June 4, 1940. Any tidbit about World War II seems to pique their curiosity. We locate Dunkirk as well as the Essex Coast of England on the map, to get a feel for the distance the small private craft travelled. It is helpful, at this point, to get students to write responsively about the Dunkirk evacuation: from a stranded soldier's viewpoint, a thwarted battleship commander's, or the perspective of a fishing-boat rescuer. At other times I have begun the reading of the book with very little introductory information beyond Paul Gallico's own. However, I find the in-depth preparation more satisfactory. Though the ending of the story is less of a surprise, an understanding of the context seems to give students a deeper appreciation of what the fictional character Rhayader did.

Paul Gallico said, "I was thrilled to the core by the British evacuation of Dunkirk and felt that I wished to make a song about it" (Gallico, 13). To me this book is a song, and mostly for that reason I read it aloud to students rather than assign it as independent silent reading. The images and bits of dialogue are poetic, and as such I find them more powerful

and moving when read aloud. Finally, I encourage oral reading because the author wrote it as a legend, passed along in the oral tradition. It seems appropriate to introduce it in that fashion.

Following reading, writing tasks may guide students to explore the aspects of heroism Philip Rhayader displays. They can work together in groups to devise a profile of the peaceful hero, afterwards scanning current newspapers and magazines to identify people who fit that description. They can once again write in the voice they used in the introductory writing assignment, responding, now, to their impression of the crippled sailor with the goose circling his boat who came, repeatedly, to the aid of the stranded soldiers. Students could compare his involvement in the war with that of a modern-day activist for peace.

Philip Rhayader is a moving, memorable example of the hero who chooses peaceful action in response to some larger strife. Atticus Finch in Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* and Sarah Winger in Gordon Parks' *The Learning Tree* are likewise fictional characters who raise their voices with quiet dignity and nobility when confronted with turmoil and unrest. Teachers and students alike face the issue of peace in a strife-torn world. For a wider look at this topic, it is important to focus attention on the non-violent hero or heroine in literature, emphasizing that it is not only the soldier in battle who serves mankind. To help our students contemplate peace, we need to draw attention to characters whose lives are committed to it.

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Understanding the Language of Peace: How Metaphors Control Our Thinking

Herb Thompson

The metaphoric use of language affects the way we conceive of peace and the way we act as a result of this conception. Metaphors, however, do more than control our thinking about peace. They guide and drive our behavior and affect the way we see the world.

For example, a common metaphor in western culture equates the concept of argument with war. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the "argument is war" metaphor gives us a language that we can readily use to understand the concept of argument and structure our behavior accordingly. For example, because of this metaphor, we can say the following things:

1. Your claims are *indefensible*.
2. He *attacked every point* in my argument.
3. His criticisms were *right on target*.
4. I *demolished* his argument.
5. I've never *won* an argument with him.
6. You disagree? Okay, *shoot*!
7. If you use that *strategy, he'll wipe you out*.
8. He *shot down* all of my arguments.

(Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:4)

Many metaphors that affect our thinking and structure our behavior are so subtle that we don't even think of them as metaphors. Such metaphors are frequently orientational or ontological in nature. Following are some examples of orientational metaphors:

1. *Happy is up; sad is down.*
   - I'm feeling *up*.
   - That *boosted* my spirits.
   - I'm feeling *down*.
   - I *fell* into a depression.
2. *More is up; less is down.*
   - His draft number is *high*.
   - My income *rose* last year.

Herb Thompson, a former high school teacher, is an assistant professor of education at Emory and Henry College in Emory, Virginia.

- His income *fell* last year.
- If you're so hot, turn the heat *down*.

3. *High status is up; low status is down.*
   - He has a *lofty* position.
   - She'll *rise* to the top.
   - He has little *upward* mobility.
   - He's at the *bottom* of the social hierarchy.

(Lakoff and Johnson, pp. 15-16)

Orientational metaphors are so ingrained in our thinking that it never occurs to us to recognize them as metaphors.

We also usually don't think of ontological statements as metaphors. Such metaphors, however, allow us to treat our experience as physical objects or substances. Once we do this, we are able to refer to such experiences, "categorize them, group them, and quantify them — and, by this means, reason about them" (Lakoff and Johnson, p. 25). "Inflation is an entity" is an example of an ontological metaphor. This metaphor allows us to manipulate and talk about the concept of inflation in the following ways:

1. *Inflation is lowering* our standard of living.
2. We need to *combat inflation.*
3. *Inflation is backing us* into a corner.
4. Buying land is the best way of *dealing with inflation.*

(Lakoff and Johnson, p. 26)

We usually don't think of orientational and ontological expressions as metaphors because, instead of structuring one thing in terms of another (e.g., argument is war), these metaphors organize "a whole system of concepts with respect to one another [e.g., happy is up; inflation is an entity]" (Lakoff and Johnson, p. 14). These organizational systems, however, can have a pervasive influence on the way we see the world.

Structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors affect the way we conceive the concept of peace. Students can be sensitized to this fact in several ways. First, teachers can share with students some of the examples I've cited here to illustrate how metaphors influence our thinking. Second, teachers can brainstorm with students and create a list of metaphors that expand and clarify the concept of peace. Such a list might include the following examples:

1. Peace is love.
2. Peace is not war.
3. Peace is unattainable.
4. Peace is costly.
5. Peace is free.
6. Peace is commitment.
7. Peace is a natural high.

Notice that the first two metaphors in the above list are structural metaphors, i.e., peace is spoken of in terms of something else. Metaphors three through

six are ontological metaphors because they treat peace as an entity. The last metaphor is an orientational metaphor. All kinds of metaphors are appropriate for this brainstorming activity, and teachers should be sure to list every metaphor students generate.

Third, after the initial brainstorming, teachers can lead a discussion about what these various metaphors reveal about the concept of peace. For instance, such a discussion might raise the following issues:

> Right now, we tend to think that the United States is at peace with the rest of the world. This statement is true, if the metaphor "peace is not war" controls our thinking. But are we truly at peace in the world? What does "peace is not war" really mean? Does it mean that if we are not involved in an armed conflict that we are at peace? What does war mean? Can't we have a war of sorts and still not be involved in an armed conflict?

A subsequent brainstorming session might be necessary to illuminate some of the metaphors hidden or contained in some of these initial comparisons, e.g., metaphors for the term "war." After students have discussed what is revealed about the concept of peace, they might be asked to summarize their understanding in a brief piece of speculative free writing.

The preceding brainstorming, discussion, and writing create a foundation for students to begin to generate novel metaphors regarding the concept of peace. For example, when we think of peace, we usually treat it as a thing, an entity, something to be achieved. Such a conception is quite natural. However, saying that "peace is an entity" limits the ways we can think about peace. Is peace really a thing, something that can be achieved?

If it has not already been discovered by students, teachers might suggest that an alternative way of thinking about peace is to conceive of it as an action, not an entity. This conception might be troublesome for students initially. One way to get around this difficulty is to re-examine the metaphors identified during the brainstorming session and explore what actions are implied by them. For example, if "peace is commitment," what kinds of actions are suggested by the term "commitment"? Some possibilities might include promising to be fair to everyone, promising to be honest and straightforward in all dealings with people, promising to follow through on pledges made, etc. Notice how difficult it is to get specific even with these more focused statements. To illustrate and illuminate these abstract statements, students can be asked to write scenarios. For example, a scenario for the statement "promising to follow through on pledges made" might be similar to the following one:

> The mine owners in South Africa promise black miners that they will remove inequities in salaries paid to black miners, who receive less pay for the same work than their white counterparts. Management then does nothing for weeks, months, and years. Violence breaks out as the black miners strike. Peace has been destroyed among a segment of South Africa's population because management did *not* honor their pledge.

After students have written one or more scenarios, they can be shared and discussed with the class. The discussion can be organized around all

scenarios written to illustrate a particular metaphor. Teachers can play a particularly important role during these discussions by constantly pointing out hidden bias in the scenarios that students have written. The above sample scenario, for instance, is biased towards the workers. Students should be encouraged to explore how management might interpret the same set of circumstances.

All of these activities can be used independently, or they can be extended, if teachers wish. Students might take different scenarios and develop debates which illuminate the metaphors that guide the thinking of those on both sides of an issue. The scenarios themselves might be more completely developed into short stories or, possibly, one act plays that could be performed by students. Certainly students could develop a more formal paper focusing on some aspect of the concept of peace. Any of these extended activities should further strengthen students' understanding of how metaphors influence their thinking and affect their concept of peace.

The way we conceive of peace, and behave as a result of this conception, is rooted in language, in metaphors. Students need to be sensitized to this fact. Maybe if they learn more clearly how metaphors affect behavior, they can begin to cut through the tired, traditional language associated with peace and generate some novel metaphors. These novel metaphors might show us how to act so that "peace in our time" won't be a meaningless phrase but a simple statement of reality.

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NCTE Promising Young Writers Program
1986

Do you teach a promising 8th grade writer? NCTE has established a new writing awards program for the junior high/middle school level.

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War and Peace in Children's Literature

Paula A. Mitchell

Children's fiction about war has changed over the years to reflect society's changing views of war. One author notes that prevailing ideas tend to be mirrored in children's books, and the books then reinforce the ideas (McCann, p. 18). For example, pulp novels of the late 1800's and early 1900's did much to glorify war and promote patriotism. In projecting the generally held view that war was romantic and glamorous, novels of the day depicted "the enemy" as individuals less than human. Their extinction was necessary for the good of mankind. Such was the theme in nearly 700 titles by Edward Stratemyer, who wrote stories set in the Spanish American War and World War I (McCann, p. 18). In one of his novels, the protagonist watched as German soldiers drowned after their ship sank. "What a relief," the character notes, "that more of the loathesome beasts have been removed from a decent world." Even Tarzan, the undisputed hero of the jungle, resorts to feeding captured German soldiers to his lions in a World War I pulp novel. McCann notes that while literature for younger children during the early part of the century was more subdued, the plots tended to be nothing more than propaganda for the same kind of gruesome, violent attitude. As society's view of war began to change with the start of World War II, children's literature became more humane and better reflected the realistic suffering and grim realities of war.

Most books for young children deal with war on a broad basis and do not deal with specific wars. Allegory is the mode used to convince the reader that war is wrong. It is important that such books present a balanced view of war, showing both sides. As with all fiction, the message should be conveyed through effective plot and character development. Accuracy of detail and a logical story line are important for even the young child.

Books About War in Prior Centuries

Drummer Hoff, by Barbra Emberley and illustrated by Ed Emberley, won the Caldecott Award in 1968. It is based on an old folk rhyme. The story details the actions of soldiers, from the general down through the ranks, as they prepare to fire a cannon. However, it is "Drummer Hoff" who actually fires the cannon which causes the destruction. This action explains the refrain interspaced throughout the story, "But Drummer Hoff

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fired it off." At the end of the story the cannon stands alone, in the middle of a field of grass and flowers. This book can either be viewed as anti- or pro-war. The cannon fire appears to be a glorious action. Yet, it is "Drummer Hoff" who fires it, suggesting it is the lowly enlisted man who carries out the war's dirty work. Close inspection of the soldiers reveals one who is missing an eye and another who has a wooden leg. Finally, the cannon is left alone at the book's conclusion, suggesting that the soldiers have perished or gone home.

Other books try to explain war and the surrounding aggression through the actions of children. After all, children are exposed to conflict and have different options for resolving conflict. This idea can be broadened in discussing conflicts between nations.

Let's Be Enemies, by Janice Udry and illustrated by Maurice Sendak, tells the story of two friends, James and John, who are angry at each other because John believes James is too bossy. They take turns telling each other they are no longer friends. Eventually they work out their differences without violence and become friends again.

Another book that promotes the idea that it is better to negotiate and talk rather than resort to physical violence is *Bang, Bang You're Dead* by Louise Fitzhugh and Sandra Scoppetone. This tale depicts two groups of children who play a game of war to determine which group will take possession of a hill. The war game escalates and soon everyone in both groups sustains serious injury without either group winning. The two groups then decide it is better to share the hill.

Most books for young children do not focus on a specific war. A notable exception to this trend is *Sam the Minuteman*, by Nathanial Benchey. Sam is a young boy who, with his father, fights at the Battle of Lexington during the Revolutionary War. While the author does not present the British side of the conflict, the causes for the war are discussed; the war is not glorified. Sam sees a friend wounded, and the author takes care to describe Sam's fear and his horror at his friend's pain and at the war in general.

Books about war written for older children generally fall within the category of historical fiction. The stories take place in specific wars and are frequently based on fact. As with books written for younger children, it is important that the story be historically and factually correct. The characters and plot must be well-developed and the storyline logical. It is important that the book offer a balanced view, not simply serve as a propaganda vehicle. Compared to books for younger children, books for older children are likely to deal with death more realistically. Though it is not necessary for a story to be graphic, it should make clear that death is a real and likely outcome of war. Stories that glorify and romanticize war do nothing to help the child develop a true sense of the seriousness of armed conflict.

The Newbery Award winner in 1944 was *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes. It tells the story of a young man growing up at the time of the Revolutionary War and how he becomes involved in the Boston Tea Party

and its aftermath. The character is real. Both the British and American points of view are presented.

In *My Brother Sam is Dead*, which is a Newbery Honor Book, the Colliers permit the readers to experience the unfairness and confusion of war when Sam, a patriot, is mistaken for a common thief and hanged by his countrymen. This book is also about the Revolutionary War and presents the dilemma of many colonials — to support the British or to join forces with other colonials to establish a new form of government.

Much literature about the Civil War seems to present the South as a place with few redeeming qualities and the North as its great rescuer. The horrible facts of countryman fighting countryman are usually present, but the fact that both sides had villains and heroes is often ignored.

A notable exception is Irene Hunt's Newbery Honor Book, *Across Five Aprils*. It describes the "rarely considered issue of what happens to the people who are not actively involved with the war but who nevertheless suffer" (Rudman, p. 369). The story centers on the Creighton family, who reside in southern Illinois. The book tells of the approaching war, its causes and how two of the Creighton brothers choose to fight on different sides. Both sides are well presented through discussions and arguments between the brothers and others in the community. The family suffers many hardships but, like the nation, endures. Students reading the book, according to Rudman, find "different accounts of battle, causes for war, and issues in order to construct a balanced, informed view."

Books About War in This Century

Some of the most compelling novels written about war deal with the Holocaust of World War II. Author Eric Kimmel explained the purpose of such literature best when he wrote:

> It (Holocaust literature) must justify their (the victims) lives, dignify their deaths, and above all, attempt, at least, to find some meaning behind the nightmare so that future generations will look upon it as more than just some ghoulish carnival. For if the Holocaust remains incomprehensible, it will be forgotten. And if it is forgotten, it is certain to recur. (p. 84)

Kimmel also makes the point that it is easier for children to view the cuddly Sgt. Schultz of television's "Hogan's Heroes" as real than it is to comprehend what the Nazis were really like. Literature can offset this kind of discrepant perception.

In Judith Kerr's *When Hitler Stole the Pink Rabbit*, a family seeks to escape Germany before Hitler is elected to power. It is not so much a story about the horror of the war as it is a story of the hardships and fears the family members endure as they build a new life in a new country.

Perhaps the best known book of the World War II era, and one read by children and adults alike, is the *Diary of A Young Girl*. It details the emotions and thoughts of Anne Frank, a sensitive and loving girl who is hiding from the Nazis. She is eventually discovered and sent to her death in a concentration camp.

One of the most harrowing books dealing with the Holocaust is Hans Peter Richter's *Friedrich*, winner of the American Library Association's Mildred Batchelder Award. It tells the step by step degradation imposed on the Jews as the Nazi persecution unfolds. Friedrich suffers as he and his parents are deprived of their property, livelihood and ultimately their lives. Friedrich dies in a bombing attack because even the safety of a bomb shelter is denied to the Jews. A chronology at the end of the story recounts the regulations used against the Jews and the young reader is left with an impression about the horror of the Holocaust long after the book is finished.

The Upstairs Room, by Johanna Reis, tells of Jews hidden away from the Nazis. The book describes the actions of those who risk their lives to save these people. This story, unlike that of the Holocaust, has a happy ending.

Uncle Misha's Partisans (Yuri Suhl) is based on the real lives of resistance fighters who fought against those who murdered their families and friends. Motele is a young boy who joins the resistance. Based on fact, the story is not pleasant; although the book refers indirectly to the death camps, the reader is aware of these facilities. A book that does deal with the death camps is *I Am Rosemarie* by Marietta Moskin. Rosemarie and her family pass through the camps at Westerbrook and Bergen-Belsen. They endure horrible conditions and treatment, but survive the ordeal.

There are many novels about World War II that do not center on the Holocaust. One such notable book is *The Silver Sword* (later released as *Escape from Warsaw*) by Ian Serralier. An exceptional book, it is well written and interesting for the young reader. It differs from conventional stories in that it includes a sympathetic view of a German farmer and his wife who have lost a son in the war. There is also a strong female central character.

Bette Greene's *The Summer of My German Soldier* is unique in that it is set in a small town in Arkansas. Twelve-year-old Patty is the town's only Jewish girl and she is desperately lonely. When a German prisoner of war escapes from a nearby prison camp, Patty befriends him. The book shatters many stereotypes, and although it has a sad ending, the reader does think about the complex and ironic nature of war.

Very little literature dealing with this country's two most recent wars is available for children. The unpopularity of the Vietnam War and the Korean Police Action perhaps accounts for this. *Matthew, Mark, Luke and John* (by Pearl S. Buck) deals with the illegitimate children left behind by American GI's in Korea after the Korean War. Although the book does not deal directly with the war, it does bring to light an important, human aftermath of war.

Much of what has been written about the Vietnam War is not balanced. An exception is a sensitive book, *The Children of War*, by Jean Lifton and Thomas C. Fox. This book is nonfiction and consists of a collection of photos of children who survived the war, as well as interviews with

these children. Through their real-life experiences, the young reader gets a sense of the horror and suffering that accompanies war.

A subject that most of us feel helpless to confront and consequently would rather ignore is the threat of nuclear war. Children are aware of and need help in dealing with this threat. In a study prepared for the American Psychiatric Association, two Harvard psychiatrists concluded in 1982 that "children are deeply disturbed by the threat of nuclear war and the risk of nuclear power. Adults experience similar feelings, of course, but some psychiatrists say children are more deeply affected because they have not yet developed the psychological defense mechanisms needed to rationalize the bomb" (Gottron).

When the Wind Blows, by Raymond Briggs, is a British novel that has recently become available in the United States. Suitable for older adolescents and adults, the book is a grim account of nuclear holocaust. For younger readers, there is a new book titled *Hiroshima No Pika*, the story of a Japanese girl who survives the bombing of Hiroshima but never grows to adult size.

Some argue that war, and the death and destruction that go with it, is not a fitting subject for children's literature. Children today are, however, more aware of war than previous generations, for they see it on television, in newspapers and in magazines. The threat of nuclear war and the total destruction it brings is a real fear. Helping children to deal with these fears and teaching them to behave with compassion and responsibility to their fellow human beings is a crucial job. Literature about war should not glorify war but rather show it for the horror that it is.

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NEW NCTE PUBLICATION FOR STUDENTS

Thinking through Language is available from NCTE, Urbana, Illinois. BOOK ONE: 104 pp., soft cover, ISBN: 0-8141-2536-0; LC: 85-13610; $4.95 for individual copy, NCTE Stock No. 25360-015 (Kirby & Kuykendall). BOOK TWO: 75 pp., soft cover, ISBN: 0-8141-5315-6; LC: 85-13648; $4.95 for individual copy, NCTE Stock No. 43156-015 (Stanford & Stanford). *Teacher Guide:* 57 pp., soft cover, ISBN: 0-8141-5015-2; $3.95 for individual copy, NCTE Stock No. 50152-015. Price information on class sets available from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

To understand what you read, write lucidly, and speak effectively, you first must be able to think coherently. But teachers of secondary school English, in a recent survey, said some materials for teaching students to think are hard to find. To meet this problem, the National Council of Teachers of English has developed a set of student materials to integrate instruction in higher-order thinking skills into junior and senior high English programs.

Titled *Thinking through Language,* this set of two student booklets plus teacher guide connects practice in analysis, synthesis, inference, problem-solving, evaluation, and prediction with students' own experiences and concerns. It replaces sterile workbooks with a variety of individual, small-group, and whole-class activities, plus journal-writing. It guides students through cognitive operations of the sort found by the National Assessment of Educational Progress to be lacking in too many students' secondary school experience.

Students are repeatedly asked to reflect on the thought processes they have just used, on how these processes work, and on how they as individuals can become more adept at using them. The authors believe that by showing students what they are capable of, teachers can spur them to further effort.

As the teacher's manual notes, *Thinking through Language* consistently serves the goals of sound secondary school English programs: more lucid writing, deeper understanding of literature, and more efficient use of language. All of these abilities, it concludes, depend on sound thinking.

Great English Teaching Ideas: Peace in the Classroom

EDITOR'S NOTE: For the next several issues, the seven sites in the Virginia Writing Project will each assume responsibility for the Great English Teaching Ideas column. The site at Virginia Commonwealth University has responsibility for the column in this issue.

Capital Writing Project

Wilma Bell

Peace . . . since 1945 we tend to view it with a kind of nuclear astigmatism. The world is either at peace or in peril of total annihilation. Armageddon is alive and living in the substrata of our consciousness as we plow through routine days and passages of life. Yet every morning the peace is broken by gunfire some place on earth; and every local skirmish that develops into what is now viewed with less terror — a more "conventional war" — still threatens to explode synergistically into the final one.

The fact that this has not happened can be attributed to such unheralded (and often publicly unpopular) alternatives as the self-restraint of power and the patience of diplomatic negotiations. These efforts, then, deserve not only better press and more credit but also a place in the skills and values we anticipate our students will need for future survival.

Keeping in mind this issue's double focus of peace and literature, a number of Capital Writing Project Teacher-Consultants and friends have shared what they already do that teaches the existential necessity of restraining power and negotiating justice. Though these skills and values are not on any mandated lists, teachers have anticipated their importance. As the warheads pile up and terrorism spreads, they are teaching the importance of communicating with restraint, the techniques of negotiating, the grim reality of unpunished evil, and the emergence of a new mythology that speaks to the post-Hiroshima world.

Teaching the Mechanics of Diplomacy

For seven years my students have found World War I the most memorable lesson in their world history course. I use a simulation game called "Grand

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Strategy" to allow them to experience first-hand what happened and why and whether they could have avoided the war or its devastating consequences.

The class is first divided into ten groups representing ten nations. Each group has one desk around which its members sit to read their country's background, decide who shall play what roles in its affairs, and develop a foreign policy, which may be secret or publicly announced. The space in between is "water," or boundaries, and cannot be traversed unless an arrangement is made between ambassadors for a meeting of the heads of state.

Such meetings take place outside the classroom and must be approved by the teacher, and at them all rules of protocol must be followed. Ambassadors must present their credentials, arrange seating according to national importance, etc. All treaties must be written up as documents to be signed formally, and they, too, may be public or secret.

As a teacher, I have a minor role. Except for approval of meetings and documents, I serve only to introduce three new elements into the scenario. I announce at appropriate times the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Fredinand, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and the Russian Revolution. As the game ends with either a peace treaty, a surrender document, or total annihilation, the winners are those who have best implemented their foreign policy, looking ahead, of course, to what effects each ending would produce. In addition to learning about World War I, the students find out how important personality and the art of statesmanship are in international negotiations.

Phillip Sorrentino
Stonewall Jackson Middle School, Hanover County

The New World

This idea can have as many aspects as you want to add. The basics include:

A new world — draw (on the blackboard or on a ditto master) the map of a new world which should be divided into four or five countries. Make the countries significantly different in resources. One or two might have seashores, for example, while another might have rivers, mountains, or plains. You may want to add oil fields to some countries, other natural resources to others.

Now, divide the class into groups of citizens — one group per country. Let them name their countries, place cities in appropriate places, design flags, and in other ways make their countries special. Remind them that this is a new world; they have the chance to make it what they want it to be, to choose the governmental system they think best, to decide what they want to export and import, to decide how they will solve national and international problems.

Once the countries are established, let them try any or all of these activities.

1. Journal entries as they establish the countries — were there group problems? Or journal entries about visits to another group's country or problems that arose as they tried to deal with neighboring countries.

2. Face to face negotiations about placement of international roads and railroads, sea access, or trading rights.

3. Letters to people in the other countries which explain systems of government, customs, sports, etc.

4. Newspaper articles involving international news and affairs.

5. Problem solving groups where representatives discuss international questions cooperatively.

The idea is for each country to be unique, but to exist in harmony with its neighbors. This goal requires communication — orally and in print — to foster cooperation and understanding. The goal is not domination, or even survival, but peace.

Kenneth Bradford
Virginia Department of Education

L'Engle and LeGuin: Writers for Peace

Two authors who take readers beyond the shadows of personal despair and the world's darkness are Ursula LeGuin and Madeleine L'Engle. Both use adolescent protagonists who struggle to define themselves and their own powers in overcoming the dark forces in their worlds.

In LeGuin's fantasy, *The Earthsea Trilogy*, Ged, a young wizard, is run ragged by the personification of his own dark side when he misuses his powers. Only when he confronts and names the terrifying monster does it retreat to its shadowy realm. Ged goes on to use his magic to save his world.

L'Engle's *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* is a companion volume to *A Wrinkle in Time* (Newbery Award Winner) and *A Wind in the Door*. It continues the story of the Murry family, focusing on fifteen-year-old Charles Wallace who is charged with the responsibility of averting imminent nuclear disaster. Through great personal danger, Charles Wallace travels back in time and uses an ancient Irish rune to change events that affect the development of the present situation.

The links of past and present, the support of family, and belief in the joy that yet "flames out" in the world make both of these authors' works sure success in grades six through nine. Some activities that might accompany the reading include:

— letters to a local Peace Education Center to find out ways in which young people can become involved in the peace movement.

— a correspondence program with those who have been imprisoned for civil disobedience.

— collaborative work with other school departments such as science or history in an exploration of alternative methods of national security, creative conflict solution, etc.

— a class newspaper written to inform the student body about local activities related to peace and social justice.

Michele Surat
author, ANGEL CHILD, DRAGON CHILD. Writing consultant

Kohlberg and Morality: A Subtle Way to Look at Peace

I'm fascinated by developmental models and the theorists who evolve them. My favorite in the literature class is Lawrence Kohlberg whose "moral stages" never fail to give my students a new way to look at characters as well as a chance to think about morality and social commitment to peace. Kohlberg's stages, loosely summarized, look like this:

- Stage One: Obedience/Punishment: If we're good, it's because we're likely to be punished for being bad.
- Stage Two: Exchanging Favors: In other words, I'll do something swell for you *if* I know you'll do something nice for me.
- Stage Three: Good Girl/Boy: At this stage, people say something like, "Well, the reason I'm so terrific is I want to be good."
- Stage Four: Law and Order: Or, the reason I behaved that way is that it's the law.
- Stage Five: Societal Good: At this stage, people behave in ways they believe will be good for all mankind. Justice is important as is the concept of "equal rights for all."
- Stage Six: Universal ethics: To quote Kohlberg, these are behaviors based "on personally chosen moral principles. . ., the principles any member of a society would choose for that society if he did not know what his position was to be in the society. . . ."

Kohlberg says that it is not what people do that determines a moral stage; rather, it is the reason they give for the action. Thus, a draft dodger, for example, who fled to Canada during the Vietnam War might be a *stage one* individual if fear of death determined his refusal to serve in the U.S. Army, or he could be a *stage five* individual who thought war was wrong for his country, or a *stage six* individual if his stated reason for refusing to serve was simply, "War is wrong."

Once I've explained the model to a class, we can look at the characters in our story or book. My hunch is that this will work well with any piece of fiction although we've had particularly fruitful discussions about Huck Finn, for example, who quite obviously was breaking lots of societal rules. Harriet Tubman is another favorite of mine. After all, it was she who, while leading slaves northward, also threatened to kill those who might prevent the escape of the whole group.

More important than a list of possible characters in books, though, is the result of these discussions. Almost no one leaves class without having had to rethink what it is that makes for real heroism, and in most cases,

it is the "peaceful" hero — the guy who strives for social justice and equality and all those other good things — who comes out on top.

Beth Boone
Director, Capital Writing Project, Virginia Commonwealth University

LORD OF THE FLIES: Another Call for Peace

Teaching William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* affords the opportunity to study the conflict between order and chaos, harmony and discord, selflessness and selfishness. It is especially valuable in ninth grade classes where primitive drive and passions may seem far removed from modern man. The work which depicts the deterioration of British school boys — the epitome of innocence, manners and propriety — is an excellent way to show the individual's and society's vulnerability to savagery.

Biographical study of the author shows his disillusionment after experiencing the horrors of World War II. His altered attitudes and interest in anthropology led to the writing of this, as well as other works, which ponder man's propensity for evil and cruelty. While some students may follow the plot line, horror-struck by the weakening of will and the demise of good intentions, others recognize the work as a parable and perceive the larger implications. All students understand better the concept that man must strive for self-control if peace is to exist. Everyone sees the need for planning, negotiation and concern for others in order for the veneer of civilization to remain intact.

Activities to accompany the reading may be designed for self-awareness, an analysis of historical events and figures, or for a way to look at the future. Consider asking students to:

- write sketches of individuals who have been especially supportive or particularly destructive.
- write a paper, "If I could do it over again, I'd. . ." in which they show how they could create a better solution or more harmonious response.
- complete these statements: "With the glory comes. . .," and "I could light one dark corner by. . ."
- find one place in the community or world that needs a renaissance of peace, and propose how that might be accomplished.
- write a song using the theme, "Life is the greatest gift."
- prepare a bulletin board showing individuals who have made the world a better place.
- hold a class barbecue at which students act according to some parliamentary procedure, use a symbol of authority such as a shell, and have a recorder who writes notes to read to the class the following day.

Barbara Bowles
Meadowbrook High School, Chesterfield County

Frodo's Message

Since *The Lord of the Rings* is available on cassette for VCRs, I introduce my middle school students to Tolkein as the last mythology lesson of the year. Already they are acquainted with the facts that Greek myths were accumulated over centuries, based partly on real events, and passed along in the oral tradition. That authors today sometimes attempt to create a new mythology to fit our world situation comes as a surprise to them.

As we view the movie, we talk about Middle-earth as a world something like ours — a world in turmoil. They can see that the Shire is like our world must have been when painters back in the early 1800's did the pictures that are in our history books. Now, like Sauron, we can blacken nature and destroy everything. I ask students to guess what the ring that Frodo suddenly finds in his pocket might symbolize, considering it must never fall into Sauron's hands.

Novice symbologists, they guess that it is evil or sin; but with more discussion they soon come up with, "It's the Bomb. And we've got to get rid of it just like Frodo!"

Struck by their own success in this new game of symbols, they cling to a simple answer. But eventually, with reminders of the kepone in our rivers, the asbestos in our buildings, the toxic wastes transported over our roads and planted in the earth, they realize the ring may be more than the Bomb, may be, instead, man's vast and exploding technology, his Star Wars capability and "clean bomb" mentality.

As we conclude our introduction to Tolkein, they are asking themselves why the heroes in this new myth are three-feet-tall, furry footed, peaceful, pipe-smoking hobbits, and just how our world can "give the ring back."

Wilma Bell
Fairfield Middle School,
Henrico County

Talking Works!

I teach Learning Disabled students. In an LD classroom it is especially necessary to keep self-concepts positive. This presents a real problem because these adolescents frequently resort to name calling and belittling remarks in an effort to build their own images. That's why I have to work very hard at providing them with acceptable ways to "be somebody." I use discussion as a medium for emotional and social growth and for keeping the peace in our classroom.

Students love to talk, and I set up times for them to do just that, sometimes as a reward, but more often to resolve conflicts in the classroom. The main rule for everyone in the discussion is respect for others. Anyone who calls another person a name or "cracks" on someone has to sit out of the group indefinitely. Their eagerness to be "back in" reinforces the need to be constantly aware of what one says to or about others, censoring what is disrespectful before it takes the form of audible speech. As a result

self-concepts improve, and they find themselves gaining more control over their old tendencies to put each other down.

I often use an activities kit that develops discussion skills: *A Journey into Self Learning Through Group Interaction* (La Mesa, CA: Human Development Training Institute, 1977). It features "communication openers" (Do I put other ideas aside as I listen? Do I let the speaker know I'm really interested?) and "communication closers" (Do I interrupt? Do I put words in someone else's mouth?). As our talking goes one, our respectful treatment grows, but peace in the classroom can never be taken for granted.

Carrie Peterson
Fairfield Middle School,
Henrico County

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The Spring 1986 issue of the *Virginia English Bulletin* will have as its focus

Censorship: Textbooks, Libraries, and Everything Else in Schools.

Shakespeare's plays in textbook versions, *A Catcher in the Rye* or *Huckleberry Finn* for class discussion, *Forever* on a school library shelf: censorship efforts never seem to go away. This issue of the *Bulletin* will look at the broad spectrum of topics related to censorship, including actual cases, exploration of causes, parental and student reactions, and the political dimensions.

Deadline for submission of manuscripts is February 1, 1986.

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The Winter 1986 issue of the *Virginia English Bulletin* will have as its focus

A Critical Look at Literature Worth Teaching

Rather than explaining ways to teach literature, this issue of the *Bulletin* seeks to present articles that offer critical analyses of short stories, poems, novels, and plays appropriate for students in grades 6 through 12. The articles may explore theme, characterization, style, structure, and other aspects of a work or several works by one or more than one author. Some suggestions for teaching the work may also be included but should not be the main emphasis of the article.

Deadline for submission of manuscripts is September 15, 1986.

The Spring 1987 issue will have as its focus

Teaching about the English Language

Whether we call ourselves "English teachers" or "language arts teachers," the basis of what we do is the English language. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening take place through language; and, of course, language is theoretically co-equal with literature and composition if one looks at the English curriculum that way. But both in programs to prepare teachers and in the curriculum, language has often been given little attention. The theme of this issue is, therefore, the language component of the English curriculum: What should we teach about it? To whom? At what grade? In what way? The editors look for both theoretical and practical articles, those that review appropriate aspects of linguistics and those that describe teaching units and strategies.

Deadline for submission of manuscripts is February 1, 1987.

Teaching the Nineteenth Century Novel in Installments: Correlating Reading and Writing

Mary Sandra Moller

What was it Merlin had Arthur do in Lerner and Loewe's *Camelot* when he was troubled? Walk out loud! Yes, think a problem through by walking through a thought until he came to a logical conclusion:

Proposition: Why do students dislike reading nineteenth century novels?

Voice: They'll tell you they're boring! They're difficult to read, and students don't like to read difficult material.

Mind: What's difficult about the reading, aside from the fact that too many young people just don't enjoy reading?

Voice: They're turned off by the style of writing (lengthy, often run-on sentences, and lofty language), long-winded descriptions and plots, not to mention the many characters.

Mind: But, aren't these the very characteristics that make us marvel at the genius of Dickens, Eliot, and Hardy?

Voice: Marvel, yes, if you are an English teacher or writer. Today's students become impatient with the lengthy description of fog in *Bleak House* or the use of moral hypocrisy and social snobbery in *Middlemarch*. They'd rather be playing a video tape, talking on the phone, or cruisin' in their vintage Mustang.

Proposition: If it's this much trouble, is the nineteenth century worth it?

Voice: Yes! The novels are full of interesting characters who teach us how to grow (Dickens' David Copperfield), to enjoy life (Dickens' Mr. Micawber), and to learn from life (Eliot's Dorothea). The plots are small slices of Victorian life: *Far From the Madding Crowd* (pastoral problems) and *Mary Barton* (urban ills). Even children's adventurous imaginations unfold in novels, such as *Huckleberry Finn* and *Treasure Island*.

Proposition: If they are worth reading, how do you get the attention of today's students and keep it for five hundred to eight hundred pages?

Mary Sandra Moller teaches English at Potomac Senior High School in Prince William County, Virginia.

Voice: Approach the lengthy novels in a way that students can handle them. Read them as they were written in sections (installments or serialization). Instead of overpowering them with a style and bulk that alienates them or sends them scampering to Walden's for *Cliffs Notes* before they open the book, cut it down — into manageable sections. Present the novel as if it were a TV serial; today's students are familiar with TV serials (*Dallas* or *Dynasty*). Then establish a relationship between the ability of the students to comprehend what they have read and their ability to express it in writing.

There it was. Too often I had felt like Arthur pacing the floor, searching for a way to make literature more interesting and meaningful. I had no Merlin who could change me into a hawk and transport me into the nineteenth century in search of a logical answer, but I did have friend, Nancy Brown (Quantico High School) who suggested the installment novel project. She had faced a similar problem with her students and had been aided by Professor Mike Lund (Longwood College) who was encouraging teachers to use this alternate method when dealing with nineteenth century novels. The installment novel project made sense. Instead of making excuses for or ignoring the reasons students gave for not liking the nineteenth century novel, I showed them how and why the reading problems had been created. They learned how and why the authors chose to write serialized novels, and they learned about the writing process as they did it. By taking smaller sections of the novel at a time, the students were not as intimidated by the writer's style (structure and language). When my Advanced Placement English 12 class read *Middlemarch*, one student called it a "series of Victorian short stories" and another said "it did not seem nearly as long as it really was. . ."

Many readers, even those of us who love the nineteenth century novel, and who pick up a copy of *Middlemarch*, can't help but be somewhat intimidated by its bulk (811 pages in paperback). When we open the first page of the first book, we find:

> Her hand and wrist were so finely formed that she could wear sleeves not less bare of style than those in which the blessed Virgin appeared to Italian painters; and her profile as well as her stature and bearing seemed to gain the more dignity from her plain garments, which by the side of provincial fashion gave her the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible — or from one of our elder poets — in a paragraph of today's newspaper (p. 9).

Victoria and Albert may have sent copies of this and other Eliot novels to relatives and heads of state, but likely as not, our teenage readers would not be initially as impressed. Therefore, I used the first book to set the stage, to talk about the author (how Eliot saw herself, her problems, and her writing), her style (sentence structure, diction, audience, and tone), and her appeal to the Victorian audience.

First, I set *Middlemarch* up as a Victorian soap opera. Most students were familiar with some daytime or nighttime soap. By using what they

knew about today's serials, I eased them into yesterday's serials. *Middlemarch*, for example, was written and published over a two-year period in bi-monthly installments in *Blackwood's Magazine* (Britain) and *Harper's Magazine* (United States) from December of 1871 through February of 1873. My Advanced Placement classes read it in eight sections over a period of eight months. I consolidated the time because of other class work and because, when published, the novel was divided into eight sections.

After we had read and discussed the first book, I introduced the first writing assignment. Part of the initial discussion dealt with George Eliot's style of writing: tone, audience, syntax, and diction. Since I was trying to get students to accept the novel by gaining a better understanding of the writing, I borrowed an idea from Richard A. Lanham's *Style: An Anti-Textbook*:

> A style is a response to a situation. When you call a style bad, or exaggerated . . . you ought to make sure you understand the situation it responds to. You may be objecting to the situation not to the style invented to cope with it. (p. 58)

Therefore, our first writing assignment was to write a letter from one character to another using an incident from one of the chapters of Book I. The letter was written in a voice appropriate to the character stressing audience, tone, syntax, and diction.

Before beginning to write, the students reread Mr. Casaubon's proposal letter to Dorothea in *Middlemarch* (pp. 43-44). The letter was then discussed as the points to be stressed; for example:

syntax: I am not, I trust, mistaken in the recognition of some deeper correspondence than that of date in the fact that a consciousness of need in my own life had arisen contemporaneously with the possibility of my becoming acquainted with you (p. 143).

diction: contemporaneously
eminent
abdicted
dissimulate

I then used student letters as examples. We discussed them just as we had discussed Mr. Casaubon's letter. However, this time we also looked to see if we could detect the twentieth century voice creeping through into the letters. Although one of my students slipped now and again, she showed a genuine attempt to imitate the spirit of the nineteenth century with her compound/complex sentences and her imbedding. She wrote

> Be not alarmed, dear sister, on receiving this letter by the apprehension of its containing any repetition of those sentiments or offers which were last night so disgusting to you. . . Please, therefore, pardon the freedom with which I demand your attention; your feelings, I know, will bestow it unwillingly, but I demand it of your justice and our bonds of sisterhood.

The student's letter reflected the reaction of Celia Brooke to her sister Dorothea's acceptance of Reverend Casaubon's proposal. The vocabulary

choice was slightly more twentieth century than nineteenth, but the student captured the spirit by belaboring points as a Victorian writer would have done.

After writing the first draft of their letters, the students divided into reading/writing groups. Each letter was read to the group by its author and suggestions were given by each member of the group as to points of revision. One student, for example, was asked to condense the length of his letter, rethink his point of view, and "Victorianize" his word choices. His subsequent letter from Sir James Chettam to Mr. Brooke looked like this:

> Although I wish them much happiness, I, as a mutual friend, will remind you, since you most likely are aware of these things already, of some of the possible consequences that may result from the joining of your niece and the minister . . . Age is not the only factor one must consider when one and another unite in that permanent bond known as marriage: the occupation of the future husband must always be considered, for certain trades make no allowance of ample or convenient time for a wife to be appropriately cared for.

Each writing assignment developed out of the reading. When teaching the novel in installments, the ideal way is for teachers to select novels they are not familiar with and to read aloud with the students. This way the direction of the discussion will build each time, and the anticipation of the audience will increase.

This sense of anticipation or expectation can be carried over into the writing. Instead of one general writing assignment developing out of the reading as would be the normal procedure when covering the novel as a single unit, several writing assignments are possible, each based on individual sections of the serialization. With the installment novel what is stressed or indicated as important in a particular section of the discussion is then picked up in the writing assignment. My writing assignments ranged from writing a Victorian-style short story to use of dramatic irony and feminist criticism.

My students enjoyed reading the nineteenth century novel in installments, and I enjoyed teaching it this way. I selected *Middlemarch* for use with my advanced placement class because it is often taught in college freshman English; with my average groups of twelfth graders, I used *A Tale of Two Cities*. The writing assignments, just as the selection of the novel, should be made to meet the needs of a particular group of students and to strengthen their reading/writing skills. For example, my average groups were weak in inferential skills; so I developed a series of questions and writing assignments stressing inferences to parallel the chapters where Dickens used especially heavy description and symbolism, such as chapter seven, "Monseigneur in Town," where he described the Monsiegneur eating chocolate.

Using the installment or serialization technique for teaching the nineteenth century novel meets the needs of today's students. It involves them in the novel as it was written for the Victorian audience, and it involves them in the writing process at each stage of the novel.

Journals: Capturing Students' Individual Responses to Literature

John W. Swope

As English teachers, we often use written texts in our classrooms. We select masterful examples of linguistic expression for many purposes. Whether poetry, prose, fiction or non-fiction, one objective stands out among others: to help students develop fuller appreciation of literary art.

My experience as a student of literature during the past quarter century centered upon reading a common selection with my classmates and then having the instructor inform me, most commonly through a lecture beginning with biographical information before proceeding into the significance of the assigned work, of what I had read and what that reading meant. Such an approach equates literature only with its content and structure and denies students the fully aesthetic experience of literary art. Instead, we need to transform students' processing of written texts into an active, exciting exploration that leads students to discover their own meaning.

Recently, individual response teaching of literature has become a frequent topic of conference presentations although individual response teaching is hardly the latest fad. Rosenblatt (1938) has been advocating the technique for nearly fifty years although the ideas of both Bleich (1975) and Miller (1980) have contributed to the current development of the response-centered literature classroom.

The approaches that Rosenblatt and Miller advocate typically involve discussions among a teacher and students. Using short selections, which students read immediately before discussions, captures students' immediate response. Using response-centered teaching becomes more difficult when students read longer short stories, novels, and full-length plays outside of class time because the immediacy of the reading event is gone when the students return to the classroom hours, if not days, later. Students' immediate responses — those that emerge as they read a text — are often forgotten before they return to class. I have used reader-response journals so students may capture their ideas and bring them into the classroom for discussion.

In *Teaching the Art of Literature* (1980), Bruce Miller views literature in three ways: as event, as object, and as message. As an event, reading literature is an aesthetic experience to participate in actively (3). Authors use the medium of written language to create visual images, to show us characters in action, to stir our emotions, to reflect upon human experience.

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When we read, we transform language into visual images — seeing the characteristics actively moving about upon a stage within ourselves, stirring our emotions, and reflecting upon our humanity.

Before we can interpret a work, we must first constitute it (Miller:19). We translate words of the text into the object that we later reflect upon. The objects we create will come from our own experience. For example, consider the visual image that comes to mind when we encounter the single word *house*. For most of us, the image is a familiar one: the house we currently live in, our dream house, the house in which we lived as a child. However, consider how the image of *house* changes in the following sentence taken from Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily."

> It was a big, squarish frame house that had once been white, decorated with cupolas and spires and scrolled balconies in the heavily lightsome style of the seventies, set on what had once been our most select street. (reprinted in O'Faolain, 211)

Most of us have seen this run-down example of Victorian architecture. When asked, we'll state where the house is — in Jackson, Mississippi; Lansing, Michigan; or Charleston, West Virginia. Wherever we locate the house, we can then place Miss Emily Grierson, another object-image drawn from our experience, in it, drawing meaning from what we see her do, hear her say. When we read, we continue to transform words into objects and collect the string of objects until, once we have finished the entire work, we have built a complete set.

Once we complete our reading, we are then ready to contemplate the objects we create, drawing abstract meaning from them. As Miller points out,

> Although the meaning is imbedded in the event-object and thus not to be pulled apart from it in the completely achieved reading, still most readers, at some point in becoming acquainted with a work, like to abstract meanings. They like to talk about a work's "theme" or "subject" and discuss the writer's ideas or even his "influences" and "sources" or his "intellectual milieu." (25)

When we discuss literature, then, the point is not to isolate a single meaning, sacrificing the whole work to the explanation or part of it; instead, we need to concentrate temporarily on one, using it as an origin. Then we can explore intensively, seeing the larger implications of one meaning before repeating the process with others.

When we teach literature, we give students a text to read, but we need to insure that the student has a fully meaningful aesthetic experience. Rosenblatt (1983) suggests that the teaching of literature begins with discussion once the students have read the text. She states that to teach literature is to help students "to perform in response to the text" (279).

The students begin with responses related to their experiences. Through discussion, the teacher draws out the students' responses, helping the students to make connections between the literature and their own experiences (67). Any arbitrary response, however, will not necessarily do in the literature class. Instead, the teacher needs to control the students' responses, directing the students so they "acquire mental habits that will lead to literary insight,

critical judgment, and ethical and social understanding" (75). For Rosenblatt, "without a real impact between the book and the mind of the reader, there can be no process of judgment at all" (75).

The teacher leads the students back to the text to find the support for their responses. Through interaction among students and the teacher, the students clarify their own evaluative criteria for literature, which come to form an overall set in time.

Although both Miller's view of literature as event, object, message and Rosenblatt's experiential approach are useful to teachers, teachers need a means to record the students' immediate responses to their reading. If we present only short pieces that students read and reread in class, we have little problem, for the student can experience the constituting of the text immediately prior to reacting to it. More commonly, however, students read longer works of literature or several short pieces as homework.

Just reading the work will not insure that the students will recall easily their reactions that occurred actively in the process of reading an assignment. To help students become better prepared to discuss the literature they read outside of class, I use a reader-response journal.

I've based the journal upon Bleich's principles of subjective criticism (1975). Students respond to the text in three ways. The first is to elicit the emotional response: how does the literature make the student feel as she reads it or immediately afterwards? I then ask the students to explore that response, trying to determine why they feel as they do. The second response is to have the students make free associations to tie what they have read to their personal experience. Finally, the students examine the text for features — words, phrases, motifs, images, sentences — that they are drawn to. I also encourage students to explore the features they isolate, forcing the students to return to the text for a closer examination of at least one part. Recently, I have added my own fourth type of response. I encourage students to note problems that they may have with the literature. These problems may include vocabulary, symbols, or troublesome passages. I want the students to record the questions that come to mind as they read so we can explore them together — whether in class, after class, or through marginal comments.

Although I collect, review, and respond to my students' response journals, I do not formally grade them. That is, I do not award *A's* or *C's*. I want the students to feel free to express whatever comes to mind concerning their reading. I encourage the students to write with an exploratory purpose, giving them an opportunity to create their own starting points for understanding of the literature. As a result, I ignore ungrammatical structures and misspellings. Instead, I make brief marginal comments, asking questions, presenting opposing ideas, or noting similar experiences of my own. Because I am not looking for a correct answer, I become excited when I can comment, "I've never thought of it this way before."

My students become more involved with their journals when I return them with comments. Because the students are conditioned to think of

questions as having a limited number of correct answers, the first journals are tentative. Often students ask a question at the end: "Am I doing this right?" The first few times that I collect the journals, I read slower and comment either to direct the students to respond in all three ways or to reassure them that their responses are valid.

Later, once the students are comfortable with their journals, I generally skim rather than read them closely. I do, however, give the students two codes to use at their discretion. Sometimes, students' responses are too personal to share even with me. When this situation occurs, I ask student to put *DR* (for "Don't Read") in the margin. Although I honor this code, I comment to the students who use it constantly, telling them that I feel excluded and cannot evaluate responses when I cannot read them. The second code is *RR* (for "Read and Respond"). I ask students to use this code when they feel they are really "on to something" or when a question that needs an immediate answer arises.

Depending upon the students' learning styles, readers may wish to respond as they read or immediately upon completion of the reading assignment. For the response journal to be effective, the students need to make three types of responses. I give my students the following directions:

A. Respond emotionally, affectively. How do you feel about what you've just read? Bored? Excited? Depressed? Ready to go out and change the world? In a paragraph or so, verbalize your emotional response in specific terms and attempt to explain it.
B. Make associations with what you've read. These should come from your experience. Push until you've gotten at least five associations. You may have had a similar experience or may have felt the same emotions as the characters.
C. Find a most important word or words, a passage, a feature, and then isolate it. If you're confused at some point, make a note of it. If you like something, record it and try to determine why. If you don't like a passage, note it and figure out why.

I prefer to collect the journals ahead of a class discussion, especially when I have assigned full-length works. In a college course, I can collect journals on Friday and return them on Monday. This makes each student responsible for having read the material prior to discussion. Unfortunately, this practice puts a greater distance between the event and the discussion of the reading. Within a secondary classroom, the journals might be read once every week or two, following the discussions.

Before we discuss the work, the students need to have their journals before them. I give journals back at the beginning of class and allow the students five minutes or so to review their comments (and mine) before we launch into any discussion (see Appendices A and B for examples of two students' responses). If I do not give this time, the students will take it anyway, so I use the time to review my own journal and any explanatory material that I may need to provide the students.

When we discuss, I usually ask students to share their emotional responses and allow them to question each other. We also look at the features and questions that the students notice. Because the associations are often too personal for many students to share, I generally do not ask the students to do so. Although I prepare critical thinking questions for each discussion (Christenbury and Kelly, 1983, outline a precise procedure to explore literature fully), I rarely have to draw upon them, unless the students get stuck. Once the students have begun to use their journals to read actively, I am always amazed that their discussions cover the same points that I would have in my best prepared lecture, although not in the same order.

The reader-response journal began as a technique to teach literature. Because I had success with it in literature courses, I have since adapted and begun to use it in other courses as well. Most recently, I have asked my composition students to apply the same procedures to the reading of both essays and their rhetoric texts. Although their responses to the rhetoric text are not as stimulating as those they make to the essays, the journal still provides them with an alternative means of exploring ideas and seeking answers to questions.

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Appendix A: Sample Student Response to "A Jury of Her Peers" by Susan Galspell

A. Emotional Response

I liked this story and its ending. I felt very sorry for Mrs. Wright, putting up with an insensitive husband and inferior, out-of-date household items, all alone all day with just her pet bird to keep her company and then her husband strangles her only friend. The poor woman had been through a lot, and if I were Mrs. Peters or Mrs. Hale I would've done the same thing they did. I thought the story had a kind of humorous, ironic ending in that all throughout the story the men were making fun of the two women for studying her quilting, her stove, etc., yet the women pieced together the story and found the evidence the men were looking for.

B. Associations

1. As the women in the story did, I have often pieced together what was going on in the room earlier from the surroundings. You can also tell

a lot about a person, as Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale did by surveying Mrs. Wright's house, when examining someone's dorm room. Whether they are wealthy, poor, smart, a partier; it is all fairly obvious by how the person lives and their possessions.

2. Mrs. Wright, while in jail overnight for her husband's murder, was worried about her fruit jars bursting because of the cold. My mother worried about her cake she had left in the oven when we were at the hospital waiting to see how my brother was after he was in a car accident. These are both irrational and inappropriate fears considering the circumstances. I think Mrs. Wright simply doesn't understand the seriousness of what she's done because she feels it was justified, while my mother was just in shock at the time.
3. The whole problem causing the women to find the evidence the men needed was that the men were being so formal in their investigation. If they had only tried to be Mrs. Wright for a second like the women they would've had their case. Two years ago a boy in my class in high school committed suicide. To his friends the clues as to why were all plain and evident, yet his parents couldn't see them. The boys could relate with him, just as Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters could with Mrs. Wright.
4. Mrs. Hale feels terribly guilty for not visiting Mrs. Wright now that she sees all that Mrs. Wright was going through. Many students, myself included, felt guilty as to Tony's death, feeling that we should've listened more often and been more sensitive and caring. Hopefully, Mrs. Hale can now make up for her insensitivity and make time for Mrs. Wright, unlike us.
5. I tried to put myself in Mrs. Wright's position in that I thought of what I would do if someone harmed my dog (which probably doesn't mean as much to me as Mrs. Wright's bird did to her since it was her only friend). I think under her circumstances I too would be capable of murder.

C. Feature

I like the way this story builds up suspense as to what happened or why Mrs. Wright killed her husband. It is as if the reader is also trying to figure it out there in the house with Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters. I also like the title. I never would have guessed it was not really at a trail that the person was tried from the title because of the word *jury*. Also, the women weren't really her friends as the word *peers* suggested to me, but as I mention early they could relate to her problems, so they essentially were her peers. The title fooled me, that's for sure!

Appendix B: Sample Student Response to "A Mule in The Yard" by William Faulkner

"A Mule in the Yard" was complicated. A simple story was made complex by mile-long sentences from Faulkner. I could see my grandmother hollering,

"them sons of bitches." You see, she watches wrestling every Saturday at 1 p.m. and she could probably wrestle to a tie at best. I mean she's tough. Old Het reminded me a lot of Howard Cosell in the way she announced the actions of the yard that afternoon. "Watch out! They in the front. . . Dar hit. . ." "Dey's mo' in de front!" If she had just used some of Howard's eminent, pugnacious, and tremendously long-winded vocabulary, she could have passed for his sister, or rather his "little monkey."

Encouraging the Gifted and Talented

How can the schools help intellectually gifted students make the most of their talents? This is the topic of the latest Starter Sheet from SLATE, the action wing of the National Council of Teachers of English. The brochure, including a discussion of the issues involved and a bibliography on teaching the gifted, has been issued as part of SLATE's continuing program: Support for the Learning and Teaching of English.

Authors John Warnock, associate professor of English at the University of Wyoming, and Susan Holt, consultant for the Wyoming State Department of Education, comment on the problems of these students, for whom the standard learning activities prescribed for their age-grade may be inappropriate. The dilemma for teachers and supervisors is twofold, they say: (1) how to offer the eager gifted student opportunities to move independently beyond the class while maintaining the regular class program and (2) how to help students who do poorly in school because of mismatches between their particular gifts and learning styles and the instructional style of the school.

Reviewing the salient research on these problems, Warnock and Holt cite expanding definitions of giftedness and the lack of generally accepted means of identifying all gifted students. The authors list strategies for identifying gifted students and modifying the curriculum to meet their needs. Suggestions include fostering learner-to-learner interaction with the teacher, individualization to provide in-depth study, and encouragement to take risks for the sake of learning.

(For a free copy of the Starter Sheet "Gifted and Talented Education," send a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request to SLATE, NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.)

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Experience Stories for the Deaf

Joan Atkinson

Believing that the library is "the gateway to learning" and books "the manna of the intellectually hungry," each September, I lead my flock of ninth grade English students through a mini-course called "Get to Know Your Library." And, by October, they no longer stand dumbfounded in front of the card catalog files.

They are a handsome group — inquisitive, observant, well-mannered and deaf. They are the same as the other students in the library except that they communicate with each other silently in sign language. They read the librarian's lips as she checks out their books, and only occasionally an embarrassing moment occurs as the surveillance buzzer blares and the deaf student goes through the gate, unaware of the commotion behind him. But, for my students, the initial enthusiasm of a trip to the library soon wanes.

Because deafness is an isolating disability, full of unexplained and misunderstood happenings, learning can be a long and hard journey, especially with only one avenue of travel, the eyes. Deaf adolescents feel the same emotions and dream the same dreams as hearing adolescents, but find little satisfaction in reading the same books as their hearing peers when it requires so much effort to understand the language. Although books can be windows on the world for the deaf, there are few books written on the low ability/high interest level that meet the needs of my ninth graders. "Better to get on the bus," I've been told, "with a romantic-looking paperback under my arm than a 'dumb,' flat third-grade reader" (even if the words are meaningless).

As a last resort to assuring that my students would develop the reading habit, I began to write my own stories for them. My first attempt, "Darlene," was meant to be a short story of a tenth grader at our school with many of the same problems as they had. Soon, Darlene began to blossom into a real-life person with an on-going life. With each situation my students faced, Darlene faced them, too. I found that writing stories of their experiences helped me to encourage their problem-solving and decision-making skills. Darlene watched as her mother's attitude about her job affected her whole family life; Martin, her boyfriend, had an argument with her and she learned how to establish some value systems. She was misunderstood by her teachers and took her frustrations out on others.

There were endless opportunities to pursue as the characters took shape by themselves. I had only to look around me to include another incident

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in the next chapter. Such incidents, because they are about someone with whom my students identify, are particularly meaningful to these young readers. Eventually, I hope to see Darlene successfully graduate from our high school. Then, we will photocopy her and bind her for all to take home with fond memories.

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

NOTES Plus, the secondary idea periodical published by the National Council of Teachers of English, welcomes previously unpublished articles for the following columns:

"Classic of the Month" (a strategy for teaching a literary classic)

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Submissions should be original, double-spaced, limited to 500-1500 words, and should set out clearly the steps for implementation. We reserve the right to edit and revise to accommodate *NOTES Plus* standards and conventions. Send submissions to Felice Kaufmann, *NOTES Plus*, National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61810. For more information, contact Felice Kaufmann at the above address.

Celebrating Southern Voices in Children's Literature: Using Fiction to Promote Imaginative Thinking

Stanley E. Baker and Karen Perry

Culturally conscious fiction for middle grade children can provide an alternative to the usual class text. These books are skillfully written by authors who employ writing techniques designed to keep children reading once they begin. In addition to assisting the learner to gain experience at using more than one text to obtain information, a skill needed for success in junior and senior high school, regional literature can reinforce knowledge already possessed by children about a given community. Important concepts, ideas, and ways of being are skillfully imbued in the texts and their accompanying pictures. Most often the major character in the book is a child; thus the story is told from the child's perspective. Matching a particular child with a fictional book containing the concepts and ideas he/she is required to know could be viewed as another form of peer-tutoring. There is little doubt that children learn quickly from one another, and in some instances they learn better and more.

Social scientists have long maintained the possibility that the South was more than mere geography. People inhabiting the southern part of the United States represent a myriad of ethnic and racial groups, yet they have somehow come to share a common culture. Realistic fiction for children offers a reliable resource wherein children and youth can reflect upon the social and cultural traditions associated with growing up in this special part of the United States. Such is equally true of other "regional" literature. The difference between regional literature and other forms is attributed to the notion that regional literature recognizes, sometimes even celebrates, the distinctiveness of the experience of growing up simultaneously different and American (Sims, 1982).

Early (1984) found that middle grade children who exhibited skill in reading-as-reasoning read widely in fiction. This finding should lead one naturally to the conclusion that using regional, fictional literature as companion texts can promote a classroom atmosphere which enables and facilitates cognitive and affective growth. There are many wonderful books currently available to facilitate this teaching strategy. We celebrate those

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wherein the voices of the Southern child can be heard, or through his/her viewpoint the reader is helped to know.

Contemporary writers of fiction are only beginning to produce literature that enables readers to "feel" history. Samuel Clemens, with his immortal *Tom Sawyer*, was not the first American writer to use the point of view of the child to tell his story while also sharing historical insight. He, however, must be credited with at least assisting those who helped to make books for children a respected and specialized addition to traditional literature. He especially captured the atmosphere and feelings of the southern people and their culture. At the same time he provided the reader with a vivid description of life along the Mississippi River, a valuable experience for a reader trying to understand the intent of instructions in geography and aspects of the social sciences. Literature akin to this can whet the appetite of even the most reluctant reader once the teacher manages to induct him/her into what we have come to call "the experience of literature."

Writers of effective culturally conscious literature take care to insure that they avoid stereotypes. Well-written regional literature, like other quality literature, provides enjoyment for the reader as well as the listener. Carlson (1972) and Jenkins (1973) identified almost a dozen benefits to be derived from such literature. They range from the improvement of individual children's self-concept to learning to respect and value the cultures of others. Virginia Hamilton (1975), whose novels usually have their settings in urban communities, transmits many of the social and cultural values through her works that are certainly rooted in the tradition of the Old South.

Classroom teachers will find that the accompanying annotated bibliography, "Children of the South in Literature," has been edited to include the name of the states. The annotations represent a survey of some of the books about Southern children and tradition. Teachers should not view the bibliography as inclusive. Other worthwhile titles should be added as teachers and children discover them. Those labeled "Southern Tradition" indicate a more universal setting — one which might have taken place anywhere in the geographic South. The inclusion of a work in the bibliography does not attest to its individual literary merit. Some of the selections have, nevertheless, received national or local recognition. Grade designations are intended to indicate minimal reading capacity levels needed on the part of the intended audience.

Usual classroom texts, television programs and the news media provide our youth with sufficient scientific and historical evidence of man's accomplishments. Growing minds need more than that, however, if they are to begin to understand that the efforts of their ancestors to stay alive and build a new way of life must be their efforts too. The pages of good literature for children can provide readiness for future learning and imaginative thought. There is much to celebrate in books about the South!

References

Carlson, Ruth Kearney. *Emerging Humanity: Multi-Ethnic Literature for Children and Adolescents.* Dubuque: Brown, 1972.

Early, Margaret. *Reading to Learn.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1984.

Hamilton, Virginia. "Newbery Award Acceptance," *Horn Book* (August 1975), 341-242.

Jenkins, Ruth. "Multi-Ethnic Literature: Promise and Problems." *Elementary English* 50 (May 1973), 693-99.

Sims, Rudine. *Shadow & Substance: Afro-American Experience in Contemporary Children's Fiction.* Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1982.

Children of the South in Literature (A Survey-Bibliography)

Armstrong, William. *Sounder. Illus. by James Barkley.* New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969 (North Carolina) [Grade 5].
A young boy is forced to deal with tragedy and bear his sorrow as a man in this story of a coon dog and his share cropper master.

Bannon, Laura. *When the Moon is New: A Seminole Indian Story.* Chicago, Ill.: A. Whitman, 1953 (Florida) [Primary].
Indian family life is experienced through Rainbow, a Seminole Indian girl who learns that something mysterious will happen when the moon is new. A pleasant surprise awaits her when she returns from visiting her relatives.

Blackburn, Joyce. *Suki and the Magic Sand Dollar.* Waco, Texas: World Books, Publisher, 1969 (Georgia) [Primary].
Set on St. Simon's island off the coast of Georgia, this early grade picture book reveals much about the sea through the antics of the main character, a little girl named Suki.

Brown, Robert. *Wilkin's Ghost.* Illus. by Lloyd Bloom. New York: Viking Press, 1978 (Georgia) [Grade 5].
Walkin faces up to a ghost and makes friends with a thief in this tale of a boy growing up.

Burch, Robert. *D.J.'s Worst Enemy.* New York: The Viking Press, 1965 (Georgia) [Grade 3].
D.J., a middle child, discovers that he is his own worst enemy in this tale of boy who exaggerates the truth, picks on his younger brother, and teases his older sister.

Burch, Robert. *Hut School and the Wartime Home Front Heroes.* New York: The Viking Press, 1971 (Georgia) [Grade 5].
This World War II story relates the sacrifices even school children had to make during war time in America. They learn that all must share in the hardship and sorrow caused by war.

Burch, Robert. *Ida Early Comes Over the Mountain.* New York: The Viking Press, 1980 (Georgia) [Grade 4].
Ida Early comes to work as housekeeper in the great house of the Sutton

family. Here the children learn that skin color makes no difference as they come to love her as one of the family.

Burch, Robert. *Simon and the Game of Chance*. New York: The Viking Press, 1970 (Georgia) [Grade 4].
Just when a growing boy comes to believe that his father must hate everything that is fun he also must adjust to tragedy relative to his mother and sister.

Burch, Robert. *Skinny*. New York: The Viking Press, 1964 (Georgia) [Grade 5].
A boy gets work in a hotel while he waits for a room in an orphanage in Georgia around the mid 1930s. A surprising ending helps to communicate to the reader that good is possible under even the most dismal conditions.

Burchard, Peter. *Bimby*. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1968 (Georgia) [Grade 3].
The Sea Islands of Georgia are the setting for this story of a young slave faced with a decision that will affect his entire life.

Carrol, Ruth and Carrol, Latrobe. *Beanie*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953 (North Carolina) [Primary].
The tradition of hard work and responsibility is shared in this story set in the mountains of North Carolina.

Chase, Richard. *Grandfather Tales*. Illus. by Berkely Williams, Jr. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943 (Southern Tradition) [Grade 4].
This collection of southern folk tales from North Carolina, Virginia, and Kentucky provides good material for storytelling time.

Chase, Richard. *The Jack Tales*. Illus. by Berkley Williams, Jr. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943 (Southern Tradition) [Grade 4].
The lives of Jack and his two brothers Will and and Tom provide the central action in this collection of Southern folk tales, some written in dialect.

Credle, Ellis. *Big Fraid, Little Fraid*. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964 (North Carolina) [Grades K-3].
Dave Cullifer learns that pranks can be foolish in this folk tale set in the lowlands of Carolina.

Credle, Ellis. *Down, Down the Mountain*. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1934 (Virginia) [Primary].
Hetty and Hank, who have never owned shoes, resort to hard work in order to earn the money to buy them.

Coatsworth, Elizabeth. *The Golden Horseshoe*. Illus. by Robert Lawson. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1935 (Virginia) [Grade 4].
Tamar, the daughter of an Indian princess and a colonist, is faced with hostility from her half brother, Roger. She provides an exciting insight into Indian culture while earning the respect of Roger.

Corcoran, Barbara. *A Dance to Still Music*. Illus. by Charles Robinson. New Jersey: Quinn and Boden Company, Inc., 1974 (Florida) [Grade 4].
Margaret, a little girl, discovers she has lost her hearing and runs away from home to avoid going to a special school.

Creedle, Ellis. *Monkey See, Monkey Do*. New Jersey: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1968 (Southern Tradition) [Grades K-3].
A poor family receives a mischievous monkey as a gift from an uncle. His mischief and their poverty form the main ingredients of this humorous treatment of a serious situation.

Friskey, Margaret. *Annie and the Wooden Skates*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1942 (Virginia) [Grade 3].
This fictional story of Robert E. Lee's daughter, Annie, provides valuable historical information about childhood in America during the period of the Civil War.

Greenberg, Polly. *Oh Lord, I Wish I was a Buzzard*. Illus. by Aliki. New York: Macmillan, 1968 (Southern Tradition) [Primary].
This delightful picture book, though controversial, relates the experience of a young girl who must pick cotton on a hot day.

Haley, Gail E. *Jack Jouett's Ride*. New York: The Viking Press, 1973 (Virginia) [Primary].
This picture book depicts young Jack Jouett's ride to warn Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry that the British are coming. Jack dresses himself in a red coat and leads the British on a merry chase.

Hays, Wilma Pitchford. *Mary's Star — A Tale of Orphans in Virginia*. Williamsburg, Virginia: Williamsburg Publishers, 1970 (Virginia) [Grades 4-7].
Mary and her brother must learn to adjust to a new way of living after the death of their father in this story which is set on Fairview Plantation in Virginia. Based somewhat upon historical information, this story sheds light on nineteenth century orphans and their lives.

Hass, Patricia Cecil. *Swampfire*. New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1973 (Virginia) [Grade 5].
Sally and Andrew spend the summer visiting their aunt in Virginia and make friends with Robin who takes them camping in the Dismal Swamp. The children's search to find the "ghost" of the swamp and capture it leads them and the reader to discover much about swamp life and the concepts of friendship, love, and family.

Henry, Marguerite. *Misty of Chincoteague*. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1947 (Virginia) [Grade 4].
Vivid images of the island-like coast of Virginia emerge in this tale of the wild descendants of the Spanish horses shipwrecked off Virginia almost two centuries ago.

Henry, Marguerite. *Stormy, Misty's Foal.* Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1963 (Virginia) [Grade 4].
Misty gives birth to a foal named Stormy in this popular story set on Chincoteague Island between Virginia and Maryland.

Jarrell, Mary. *The Knee Baby.* Illus. by Symeon Shimin. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1973 (Southern Tradition) [Primary].
The coming of a new baby causes unhappiness for Allan who used to be the "Knee Baby," a Southern expression used to label the youngest child in a multiple-child family.

Jarrell, Randall. *The Bat Poet.* Illus. by Maurice Sendak. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963 (North Carolina) [Grade 4].
A value for individual difference and lots of information about bats is offered in this story set in the forest of North Carolina. The book also contains poems that tell of the life and feelings of the bat.

Kyle, Louisa Venable. *The Witch of Purgo.* Virginia: Four O'Clock Farms Publishing Co., 1973 (Virginia) [Grade 4].
A Chesapeake Indian boy tells the newly arriving English colonists about America in this collection of historical fiction.

Lawson, John. *The Spring Rider.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968 (Virginia) [Grade 5].
Through a series of mysterious encounters with strangers during the Civil War, Jacob and his sister reveal much about the people in the mountain area of Virginia.

Lee, Mildred. *The Skating Rink.* New York: Seabury Press, 1969 (Georgia) [Grade 5].
Tuck, a fifteen year old who stutters, struggles to become a good skater after he meets an older friend who teaches him about determination and hard work.

Lenski, Lois. *Strawberry Girl.* New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1945 (Florida) [Grade 7].
The Slater and Boyer families never did get along. After fighting and trouble over the years they come to understand and love each other.

Marshall, James. *A Summer in the South.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977 (Southern Tradition) [Grade 3].
Characters with names like Don Coyote, Mr. Paws, and Marietta Children help Eleanor Owl, a detective, to tell this delightful tale of mystery and adventure.

McNeer, May. *Bloomsday for Maggie.* Illus. by Lynd Ward. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976 (Florida) [Grade 7].
Maggie Murphy discovers the difficulty women experience when she goes to work for a newspaper. With the support of her family she is enabled to endure the prejudice that she must face in a work world usually dominated by males.

Milton, Hilary. *November's Wheel.* New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1976 (Southern Tradition) [Grade 5].
Seeing others help those who are less fortunate than themselves, Billy Bob gives up his new bicycle in order to help too during the years of the Great Depression.

Patterson, Katherine. *A Bridge to Terabithia.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1977 (Virginia) [Grade 5].
A swing on an enchanted rope gives two children just the right secret place that all children seem to need.

Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan. *The Secret River.* Illus. by Leonard Weisgard. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1955 (Florida) [Primary].
When the river dries up, hard times come to the forest in this picture book of life in coastal Florida.

Sargent, Sarah. *Secret Lies.* New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1981 (Virginia) [Grade 4].
When Elvira's mother runs away she is left to live with relatives. Growing up means discarding her fantasies as she learns to love and be loved by her "new" family.

Stolz, Mary. *Lands End.* New York: Harper and Row, 1973 (Florida) [Grade 5].
The sea is the background for this story of a loner who meets a family who helps to change his life.

Smith, Doris Buchannan. *Kick a Stone Home.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, Co., 1974 (Georgia) [Grade 5].
This humorous and compassionate tale of growing up is told through the eyes of Sara, a young girl just entering womanhood.

Sorenson, Virginia. *Curious Missie.* Illus. by Marilyn Miller. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World Inc. 1953 (Alabama) [Grade 4].
Frustrated by her own desire to know the answers to things that perplex her, Missie sets out to get a bookmobile to enable herself and others to find answers in books.

Taylor, Mildred D. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.* New York: Dial, 1976 (Georgia) [Grade 5].
Just one of a series of excellent books by this writer about a black family in the South. The work provides an excellent example of how strength and fortitude can overcome the effects of injustice.

Thomas, Ianthe. *Lordy, Aunt Hattie.* New York: Harper & Row, 1973 (Southern Tradition) [Grade 4].
This tone poem of growing up in the Deep South demonstrates that even the most downtrodden people can possess positive self-concepts.

Turpin, Edna. *Littling of Gaywood.* Richmond, Virginia: Dietz Press, Inc., 1939 (Virginia) [Grade 8].

Much about the Catawba and Cherokee Indians is revealed in this story of an orphaned girl brought to live at Gaywood Plantation.

Waldron, Ann. *The Lucky Star.* New York: E. P. Dutton, 1977 (Florida) [Grade 5].
Set on the coast of Florida, this is a story through the eyes of a young girl named Quincy. She is considered "unusual" by the other members in her family until an unexpected, exciting event proves otherwise.

Wechter, Nell Wise. *Swamp Girl.* North Carolina, 1971 (North Carolina) [Grade 6].
A young girl shows her determination to find the hidden treasure that her ancestor buried in this mystery filled with information about swamp life and family continuity.

Woolley, Catherine. *Ginny and the Mystery Light.* Illus. by Don Almquist. New York: William Morrow and Co., 1973 (South Carolina) [Grade 3].
Ginny attempts to solve the mystery of the light on Lonesome Bay Road as she spends the Christmas holiday in Charleson, South Carolina. The story itself is based in part upon Carolina folklore.

Yarbrough, Camille. *Cornrows.* Illus. by Carole Byard. New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1979 (Southern Tradition) [K-3].
While braiding the children's hair into cornrows, Mama and Great-Grammaw tell of the meaning of the designs of the cornrows, and also present some of the tradition and richness of Afro-American history.

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The Research Foundation of the National Council of Teachers of English invites K-12 classroom teachers to submit proposals for small grants (up to $1,000) for classroom-based research on the teaching of English and language arts. These grants are intended to support research questions teachers raise about classroom issues. They are not intended to support travel to professional meetings, to fund the purchase of permanent equipment or commercial teaching materials, to provide extended release time, or to underwrite research done as part of a graduate program. Address requests for information and for application guidelines to Teacher Researcher, NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

Narrative Structure as a Tool for Discovering Theme in Short Fiction

Marian H. Cusac

A plot is what happens; a theme is what the happenings add up to.[1]

One of the best ways to discover what a piece of prose fiction is about is to look at its narrative structure. Other elements of fiction — character, setting, symbolism, use of dialogue, and so on — may play greater or lesser roles in a particular short story or novel, but in all works of fiction, some sort of story is told. How this sequence of events is put together is perhaps the fundamental aspect of prose fiction. Here, I hope to describe the ways of analyzing narrative structure that I have found useful in the classroom as a means of getting past the plot and to the story's theme, a most important element of fiction that students sometimes have trouble seeing.

Episodic Structure

There are three basic kinds of narrative structure, two of them quite widely recognized and the third perhaps not so well known (see outline and lists at end). The first is often called episodic structure and is found primarily in the novel rather than in the short story. Here, events follow along like beads on a string, with no true causal relationship among them. The only thing really holding the novel together is the presence of the protagonist in each of the narrative "beads." The picaresque novel is the primary example of this kind of narrative structure, and the generalized theme of many picaresque novels appears to be something like this: "Life is a series of unrelated scrapes and adventures, but if our heart is in the right place, everything will turn out happily." Witness *Tom Jones*.

Events Structure

Episodic structure is obvious and, because rarely found in short fiction, not particularly useful to discuss outside courses in the novel *per se*. But we teach a great many more stories than novels, and the second widely recognized form of structure is quite useful in studying short fiction. This form we call an *events structure*. This is the basic Aristotelian plot, illustrated by Freitag's triangle, with rising action, turning point, and falling action. Here we may identify several additional, more specific events to help students see how a story is put together and thereby see its theme more clearly.

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In a short story, the first of these events, which may or may not be significant thematically, is the *point of entrance*. This is simply the first real action we see taking place in the story, the first time a character says or does something. It may appear in the first sentence or after a number of paragraphs of exposition. Wherever it comes, it is simply the first of the actual events of the story.

The second major element in an events structure is quite important thematically. This is the *defining event*. Here, the situation of the protagonist is defined; we see (although probably only in retrospect) what the story is "about"; the conflict is set up which determines the main thrust of the story and which leads, in a cause-and-effect manner, to the crisis.

The *crisis*, the turning point, is the next major event. Here protagonists are faced with a situation which is indeed crucial and must make a decision about their course of action. Or in the case of passive protagonists, the decision is made for them. In either case, the preceding events have led up to this turning point, and the turn having been made, certain other events will follow, again in a cause-and-effect manner.

The event which is the primary logical outcome of the turn made at the crisis, we call the *catastrophe*. If this term is used, we must make sure that students understand we are using it in its Aristotelian sense, and not in its contemporary journalistic sense descriptive of a fire, a flood, a failed test, or some other disaster. In its older sense, it has no necessarily negative connotations; it means simply the outcome of the turn things took at the crisis. We may wish to use the simpler term "outcome." Terminology is not important here; understanding is.

The final specific element of an events structure we may call the *denouement*, which, like the point of entrance, may or may not make any important thematic statement. It is the last action that takes place in the story, bringing a feeling of closure to the narrative. We may wish to call it simply the wrap-up.

These structural events will probably be seen clearly only after the story is read and is then considered as a whole, and obviously a story may contain numerous events in addition to the five significant ones described above; for example, all kinds of complicating developments may occur between the defining event and the crisis. But in a typical story whose backbone is an events structure, we will be able to discern the five; and of those five, the three most significant are the defining event, the crisis, and the catastrophe. These are the three which will give us real insight into the theme or meaning of the story.

To illustrate with a very short and familiar narrative, consider the parable of the prodigal son and note the five elements of the events structure.

> There was once a man who had two sons. The younger one said to him, "Father, give me my share of the property now." So the man divided his property between his two sons. After a few days the younger son sold his part of the property and left home with the money. He went to a country far away, where he wasted his money in reckless living. He spent everything he had. Then a severe famine spread over that country, and he was left without a thing. So he went to work for one

> of the citizens of that country, who sent him out to his farm to take care of the pigs. He wished he could fill himself with the bean pods the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything to eat. At last he came to his senses and said, "All my father's hired workers have more than they can eat, and here I am about to starve! I will get up and go to my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired workers.'" So he got up and started back to his father.
>
> He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. "Father," the son said, "I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son." But the father called to his servants. "Hurry!" he said, "Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found." And so the feasting began. (Luke 15:11-24, Today's English Version)

The point of entrance occurs when the younger son asks for his share of his inheritance. The defining event occurs when the son, having received his share, sets out for a far country. The crisis occurs when, in the stately and euphemistic phrases of the King James Version, he has "wasted his substance in riotous living" and comes to himself in a pig-sty. Here he has reached the nadir for a Jew, feeding pigs. He is starving, and the crisis, the turning point, is his decision, "I will get up and go to my father." The catastrophe or outcome occurs when the father welcomes him home and orders the feast, and the denouement or wrap-up is "And so the feasting began." The defining event, crisis, and catastrophe of this story clearly indicate a theme which could be stated as "A loving father will welcome home an erring but penitent child."

(A word about the term *climax* may be in order here. It should not be confused with *crisis*. Climax means the point of highest emotional involvement of the reader in the story, the point of greatest psychological intensity or excitement. The climax may be the same as the crisis, or it may be the same as the catastrophe or the denouement. Possibly it could be none of these, but a still different event, although that seems highly unlikely in a story with a coherent events structure.)

This simple, turning-point kind of structure is apparently the oldest way to tell a story, at least in the Western world, and is found in countless narratives. It seems almost built into the human mind, along with our inborn ability to use language.

Thematic Structure

In addition to the episodic and events structures, there is a more recently developed and sophisticated way to tell a story, a lesser known way that we can call *thematic structure*. In this kind of structure, we have again three significant elements, but they may not be events in the usual sense of the word; that is, they may not involve actions by characters in the externally observable (fictional) world. We may call these three elements the *definition*, the *confirmation*, and the *culmination*.[2] Unlike the main parts of an events structure, these three are not causally related and no

turn occurs; rather, they are related thematically. The definition indicates the theme of the story for the first time; the confirmation states it again in different terms; and the culmination states it yet again in a still different manner. There is, therefore, a straight-line, building effect rather than a turn.

Because of its relative rarity and its fairly recent appearance in the history of prose fiction, it is hard to find a story as well known as that of the prodigal son to illustrate the pattern of a narrative with thematic structure. The best example I know is Katherine Anne Porter's story "Flowering Judas."

This is an extremely rich story, one that is difficult to summarize because of its extensive use of symbolism and its lack of external events. The central character is Laura, a young American woman teaching school in a city in Mexico. Through a number of flashbacks, we learn a little of her background and of her present involvement with a revolutionary movement. But the only real events occurring in the time-span covered by the story proper are these: having returned home in the evening, Laura sits and talks a while with Braggioni, a fat, corrupt revolutionary leader who now leaves the danger and martyrdom and dying to others; Braggioni leaves, and Laura goes to bed and has a dream. Clearly, in a story like this, externally observable events are of little importance. This is a story with a thematic structure.

The definition occurs about one-third of the way through the story:

> Laura feels a slow chill, a purely physical sense of danger, a warning in her blood that violence, mutilation, a shocking death, wait for her with lessening patience.[3]

This is a one-sentence description of a sensation that Laura has during her conversation with Braggioni; it does not take place in the world of "events" at all. Rather, it states the theme for the first time, through the description of Laura's feelings.

The confirmation occurs about two-thirds through the story. It is in a paragraph of generalized summary of Laura's activities:

> She is not at home in the world. Every day she teaches children who remain strangers to her, though she loves their tender round hands and their charming opportunist savagery. She knocks at unfamiliar doors not knowing whether a friend or a stranger shall answer, and even if a known face emerges from the sour gloom of that unknown interior, still it is the face of a stranger. No matter what this stranger says to her, nor what her message to him, the very cells of her flesh reject her knowledge and kinship in one monotonous word. No. No. No. She draws her strength from this one holy talismanic word which does not suffer her to be led into evil. Denying everything, she may walk anywhere in safety, she looks at everything without amazement. (p. 97)

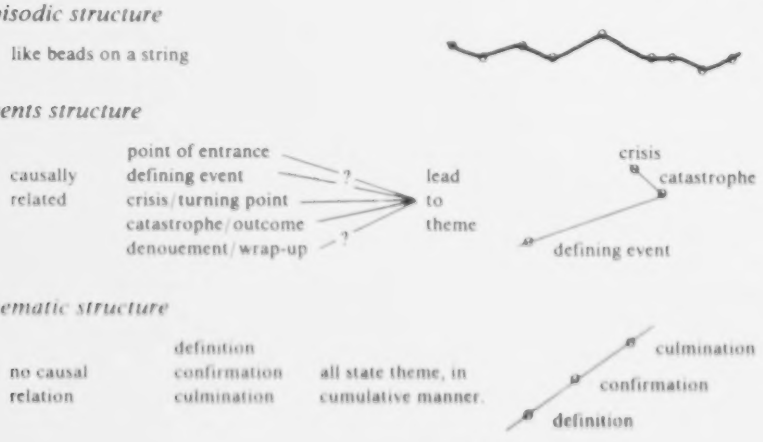
Clearly, there is no cause-and-effect relationship between the definition and the confirmation; Laura's feeling of chill and impending death do not cause the summary of her activities or her reliance on the "holy talismanic word, No," both of which occurred prior to her feeling of chill. But just as clearly, the theme is restated here, the theme that denial of feelings and of involvement with other people leads to psychological death.

The culmination occurs with the final paragraph of the story describing Laura's dream of Eugenio, the political martyr, now dead, whom she had recently visited in prison and to whom she had brought the tablets which enabled him to kill himself. Again, the culmination is not caused by either the definition or the confirmation. Here is the dream:

> The tolling of the midnight bell is a signal, but what does it mean? Get up, Laura, and follow me: come out of your sleep, out of your bed, out of this strange house. What are you doing in this house? Without a word, without fear she rose and reached for Eugenio's hand, but he eluded her with a sharp, sly smile and drifted away. This is not all, you shall see — Murder, he said, follow me, I will show you a new country, but it is far away and we must hurry. No, said Laura, not unless you take my hand, no; and she clung first to the stair rail, and then to the topmost branch of the Judas tree that bent down slowly and set her upon the earth, and then to the rocky ledge of a cliff, and then to the jagged wave of a sea that was not water but a desert of crumbling stone. Where are you taking me, she asked in wonder but without fear. To death, and it is a long way off, and we must hurry, said Eugenio. No, said Laura, not unless you take my hand. Then eat these flowers, poor prisoner, said Eugenio in a voice of pity, take and eat: and from the Judas tree he stripped the warm bleeding flowers, and held them to her lips. She saw that his hand was fleshless, a cluster of small white petrified branches, and his eye sockets were without light, but she ate the flowers greedily for they satisfied both hunger and thirst. Laura cried No! and at the sound of her own voice, she awoke trembling, and was afraid to sleep again. (pp. 101-102)

This is the culminating presentation of the theme of the story, which might be stated as "Failure to recognize and act upon our need to be truly involved with others leads to emotional death." While the religious elements also play a part in the story, I believe the element of psychological and emotional death is its major theme. We also note that the rhythmic placement of the definition, confirmation, and culmination is just as important in a story with a thematic structure as the rhythmic placement of defining event, crisis, and catastrophe is in a story with an events structure.

Figure 1: Outline of Narrative Structure



Thus, in both an events structure and a thematic structure, we typically find three story elements of primary significance. In an events structure, they are events, fictional characters interacting with each other and with their surroundings; the events are causally related; and there is a turning point. In a thematic structure, however, the three significant elements may not be events at all; they may be a feeling, a generalized statement, a dream, a change in the weather, a snatch of dialogue, a description of a landscape, a building, a room, a painting, or any other element of setting — indeed, they may be anything that can go into a piece of prose fiction. These three elements will not have a causal relationship or a turning point, but will build in a cumulative manner and carry the theme of the story.

Occasionally there is a story that interweaves both an events structure and a thematic structure, simultaneously presented. Such a work is Thomas Wolfe's "The Child by Tiger." Here is a brief description of both structures of this marvelously crafted story.

In the events structure, the defining event occurs when Dick Prosser, a friendly, well-liked, multi-talented black man, is struck in the face by the drunken white, Lon Everett, and knows he cannot strike back. Dick's situation as a black man in a fairly small, mostly white Southern town about 1912 is thus defined, in a specific incident which the reader knows must represent countless other incidents of varying degrees of violence and oppression in Dick's life. The crisis is Dick's rampage through the snow-covered streets of the town and out into the countryside, in which he kills nine men, both black and white. The catastrophe, inevitably, is Dick's death at the hands of the white mob. The theme indicated by these causally related events might be put this way: "Continued oppression of blacks by whites leads to violence and death for both," or even more generally, "Oppression of one human group by another is highly destructive."

The thematic structure involves not Dick's relation to society but the initiation of the narrator and his young friends into an awareness of evil in the world far beyond anything they had known before. Each of the significant elements of the story involves *seeing*, either literally or figuratively, and in this story I believe there are four rather than three such elements. The definition occurs when the boys inadvertently see, lying by his Bible, the rifle Dick has secretly bought and is keeping in his room in the basement of the Sheppertons' house where he works. The confirmation is in their seeing (and hearing) the mob gathered in the Square to track Dick down. An additional element in the building of the theme occurs when the boys see Dick's body, riddled with bullets and hung on display in the undertaker's window. Perhaps we could call this additional element a re-confirmation; but again, terminology is subservient to insight. The last element, the culmination, the final presentation of the theme, occurs years later, apparently about a quarter of a century, when the narrator looks back at these events from his early adolescence and "sees" their meaning; he sees "man's evil innocence"; he sees that we are all a tiger and a child.

Hunting for narrative structure is not necessary or desirable for every piece of prose fiction; some stories do not lend themselves particularly well to it, although most do. But students often find it fun and challenging, somewhat like solving a computer adventure or detective game. And more important, identifying narrative structure can be a useful tool in discovering not only how the author consciously or unconsciously put the story together but what the story adds up to, what it says to us about our common human condition.

From various editions of widely-used texts, such as Perrine (*Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*), Dube (*Structure and Meaning*), Kennedy (*Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*), Mizener (*Modern Short Stories*), and Pickering (*Fiction 100*), here are lists of a few stories having . . .

. . . events structure:

"The Catbird Seat," Thurber
"Babylon Revisited," Fitzgerald
"I'm a Fool," Anderson
"I Want to Know Why," Anderson (the "Saratoga" section only; preceded by background material, description, introduction of theme ["I'm puzzled"], etc.)
"The Most Dangerous Game," Connell
"My Oedipus Complex," Frank O'Connor
"Barn Burning," Faulkner
"Haircut," Lardner
"The Japanese Quince," Galswoethy

. . . thematic structure:

"Flowering Judas," Porter
"Defender of the Faith," Roth
"Paul's Case," Cather
"The Rocking-Horse Winner," Lawrence
"Odor of Chrysanthemums," Lawrence
"Clay," Joyce
"Araby," Joyce
"The Jolly Corner," James
"The Real Thing," James
"Almos' a Man," Wright
"The Open Boat," Crane
"Battle Royal," Ellison
"The Crysanthemums," Steinbeck

"Heart of Darkness," Conrad (has double thematic structures: one about physical "civilization" and savagery, symbolized by the grove of death, death of the helmsman, and circle of heads; the other about mental "civilization," involving the "moral idea," "enlarged mind," and the final lie.)

. . . both events and thematic structures:

"The Child by Tiger," Wolfe
"The Destructors," Greene
"The Silver Crown," Malamud

NOTES

[1]Sylvan Barnet, Morton Berman, and William Burto, *Types of Drama: Plays and Essays*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1981), p. 28.

[2]For these terms I am indebted, as are all his students, to Professor Harry Kitsun Russell of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

[3]In *The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1965), p. 93.

Literature Worth Teaching: Poems by Jim Harrison

Edrie Bays

Poetry provides a link to numerous language concepts and to the culture in which it was written. Thus contemporary poetry not only may be used to teach traditional material (such as literary devices) but also to stimulate students' interest in contemporary issues and in poetry. Many of the poems of Jim Harrison, Michigan-born poet-novelist, provide varied teaching opportunities. These assignments are adaptable to different age groups and ability levels.

"Sketch for a Job Application Blank" is one of Harrison's poems filled with teaching possibilities. If your students have finished career units on the application or the resume, this poem offers a contrast to the anonymity of such forms, much as *Chorus Line* expresses about the audition process. The poem can serve as a discussion springboard to multiple issues: how feelings of nonentity generate frustration, how societies and bureaucracies breed nonentity, how one can cope with these situations and frustrations, how creativity can be (has been) used to combat a sense of nonentity. Depending on the class, the assignment can grow into lengthy individualized study-projects exploring "acceptable" expressions of individuality — such as hobbies, arts, and crafts — or researching aspects of our culture which create frustration and those which are reactions to these. This poem opens the door to students' self-examination into who they are and how they feel about themselves and what they like and dislike about themselves. These discoveries can lead students to researching careers and to promoting their individuality in resumes, letters of application, and business interviews. Not the least of possibilities for this poem study are vocabulary extension and the examination of allusion.

Harrison's poem "David," which relates a young boy's awareness of his father's death, allows class discussion and writing about childhood memories and death; moreover, it presents the opportunity to introduce or review the concept of point of view and to relate it to the students' lives. For example, here are some questions that may be used in small group discussions or journal exploration: Do children realize more than adults credit them for knowing? Can you think of times in your life when adults treated you as though you couldn't understand what was going on? Have you treated younger children in this way? How does the poet let the reader know what

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is going on in the boy's mind? How would the poem change if the poet had used personal or objective point of view instead of omniscient point of view? Can you recall situations in your life when someone seemed to understand how you felt even though he or she was not in your predicament? How does seeing a situation from another person's viewpoint affect your actions and reactions?

Both imagery and shifting point of view are good learning topics in "Dusk." Harrison's description moves from distant visual images — dusk, clouds, heat lightning — to the closer olfactory details of the swamp and the auditory detail of a loon's cry. Harrison begins his short second stanza with a statement on the coming of darkness; then he shifts to first person in the last line, ". . . . I shatter the moon with an oar." Discussions and writing assignments should begin with the students' experiences in and feelings about nature. How do you feel when you're alone outside in a quiet spot at sunset? Do you feel nervous? excited? relaxed? Do you feel a part of nature or like an outsider? How do you think the persona in the poem feels? What clues about these feelings does the poet give the reader? Students can pursue their feelings in their own poems, short stories, or personal essays.

Students' understanding of the place of man in nature may be expanded in "Sound." This poem is an imagery-filled description about a person roofing at dawn. The poet shifts details from taste and touch to sight, movement, and sound. His images move back and forth from the persona to the surrounding natural world. Students can sharpen analytical skills through examining the poet's variety and placement of details; this can lead to more student generated poems or descriptive writing focusing on sensory detail. Once more beginning with the students' opinions of their places in nature, the discussion or writing moves to the opinion of the persona and the technique of the poet to clue the reader.

"Dead Deer," when studied after the above, allows the student to examine how one poet explores one theme — man and nature. Furthermore, it presents an opportunity to discuss the concept of irony. The poem describes the remains of a deer and hypothesizes how it died of starvation in winter; now lush grass surrounds the place it fell. The subject also permits another discussion on death and dying.

Although all of Harrison's poems in *Selected and New Poems — 1961-1981* (published by Delta/Seymour Lawrence) are not suitable for most classrooms, several of his poems are indeed literature worth teaching, and those mentioned here, in particular, provide excellent encounters with poetry.

Reviews

Pamela Petrick Barron, Jennifer Q. Burley, Eds. *Jump Over the Moon: Selected Professional Readings*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1984, 512 pp., $12.95. Reviewed by Rosary Lalik.

> Hey diddle diddle,
> The cat and the fiddle,
> The cow jumped over the moon,
> The little dog laughed to see such a sight
> And the dish ran away with the spoon.

This well known nursery rhyme typically evokes fantastic and comical images leaving one with the impression that the most absurd triumph is a real possibility — a possibility which will somehow liberate observant spectators from their mundane and conventional responses to life.

Like the rhyme from which its title is drawn, the book, *Jump Over the Moon*, may have a liberating effect on the audience of elementary school teachers who take the opportunity to grapple with its contents. Through their selection of articles, the co-editors, Pamela Petrick Barron and Jennifer Q. Burley, have gone far beyond their initial purpose of introducing their audience to the world of picture books. Instead they have created a richly patterned tapestry of ideas about teaching literature and literacy. The detail and diversity of the ideas represented in this volume should stimulate the thinking of educators about numerous possibilities for approaches and materials that might enliven the elementary school language arts program. In our present era in which language instruction is often limited to models of teaching as asking literal questions (Lalik & Pecic, 1984) mentioning reading skills (Durkin, 1979) and managing students' progress through instructional materials (Duffy, 1982), a book like *Jump Over the Moon* represents a much needed oasis of thought about teaching language in the elementary school.

One especially salient characteristic of this book is the diversity of its contents. Numerous articles provide important background information for the interested reader. So for example, in her article, "Pictures Used with Storytelling," Anne Pellowski chronicles the emergence and development of picture storytelling. Betty Bacon explores criteria for juvenile non-fiction in her piece, "The Art of Nonfiction." Olga Richard discusses the critic's role in assessing illustrations, while Arthur Applebee discusses bias and stereotyping in children's literature. These are just a few illustrations in a book marked by the breadth of the background information available to the reader.

However, the scope of this volume is not limited to pertinent background information. The book also contains numerous articles describing instructional approaches. Examples include an article by Robert Barton and David Booth in which they describe ways to use drama to guide students'

individual responses to literature. Their article, "Do Swans Really Eat Fudgesicles? The Picture Book and Child Drama," includes a detailed account of three lessons in which teachers actually engage their students in dramatic response to literature. Geoff Fox presents many suggestions for helping students respond to literature as they work individually or in small groups. In this article, "Twenty-Four Things to Do with a Book," Fox presents his ideas simply and directly as a list of suggestions. Ideas about instruction also extend to the teaching of mathematics ("Using Children's Literature to Teach Mathematics" by Muriel Rogie Radebaugh) and instructing students with learning disabilities ("Wordless Picture Books and the Young Language-Disabled Child" by Karen D'Angelo). Instructional suggestions span age levels, ranging from ideas about interacting with very young children ("Reading with an Infant" by Linda Leonard Lamme) to ideas for introducing adults to the art of storytelling ("Storytelling: Preparation and Presentation" by Augusta Baker and Ellin Greene).

A second distinguishing characteristic of this book is its recognition of the educative value of presenting inconsistent, even conflicting, viewpoints. So in the chapter on wordless picture books, there appear two articles in which authors describe methods for using such books to promote literacy ("Wordless Picture Books and the Young Language-Disabled Child" by Karen D'Angelo and "Use Wordless Picture Books to Teach Reading, Visual Literacy and to Study Literature" by Patricia Jean Cianciolo) alongside a third article in which Patrick Groff raises questions about the use of wordless books as a stimuls for literacy ("Children's Literature Versus Wordless Books"). This appreciation for debate pervades the volume. Among the debates presented, the one concerning the appropriateness of controlling vocabulary in books for young readers (presented by David C. Davis in "What the Cat in the Hat Begat" and Robert C. Newman in "What the Cat in the Hat Begat, Begat") should be of special interest to those concerned with emerging literacy. Like other aspects of this anthology, the editors' apparent appreciation for divergent viewpoints allows readers to critically explore several competing arguments in their attempts to gain meaning.

A third characteristic of this book is the practicality of the information presented. One article contains an example of a story that can be used to promote the art of storytelling and an address to use in seeking further information about storytelling (in "Storytellers in the Classroom" by Stewart Marsden). Arthur Appleby (in "Toward Pluralism: Resources for Avoiding Stereotypes and Bias in Children Literature") presents sources of annotated lists of nonsexist picture books. Carol Hurst (in "Books. . . Love 'em and Use 'em") provides purchasing information about useful trade books. Armed with such information, an interested reader can actually obtain copies of the suggested books. For those interested in developing programs on film appreciation within the elementary school, Jill P. May includes a list of names and addresses of film distributors (in "Encouraging Children's

Creative Oral Responses through Nonnarrative Films"). Many authors provide specific examples of the ideas they present. This approach is exemplified by Dorothy H. Cohen (in "Word Meaning and the Literacy Experience in Early Childhood") who provides numerous examples of techniques that storytellers can use to clarify the meaning of important words. Overall the inclusion of information about sources, materials and procedures also liberates the reader. In this case, the liberation comes in the form of allowing the reader to seek information that lies beyond the scope of this anthology and/or allowing the reader to actually test out presented ideas.

The articles contained in this collection tend to be conceptually rich without being unnecessarily heavy with jargon. In most cases, authors present their ideas in language which is direct and readable. Consequently, the collection should attract an audience of both professional and non-professional readers. For most interested readers, the encounter with *Jump Over the Moon* should not be unlike a child's encounter with the nursery rhyme from which the title is drawn. That is, it should leave the reader intrigued by its content and challenged to consider its implications.

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Merlyn's Pen, Merlyn's Pen, Inc. Reviewed by Alan McLeod.

Merlyn's Pen, a national magazine of literature by and for students in grades 7 through 10, was launched this fall. Many schools should have already received complimentary copies of the premier issue.

I spent a very pleasant two hours with my review copy. The inaugural issue contains stories, poems and reviews in response to promotional posters mailed to 1,000 schools in March.

The editorial staff includes 14 teachers, some of them also writers and artists. The staff is large enough to respond to young authors sending manuscripts. Published students receive a complimentary copy of the issue containing their work. For further information, contact Jim Stahl, Publisher and Editor, P.O. Box 716, Greenwich, RI 02818 or call the toll free number 800-247-2027. Individual subscription rates are $8.75 annually; reduced prices for class sets (e.g., 11-20 subscriptions) are $4.65 each.

From the inside front cover: "By publishing student writing, *Merlyn's Pen* seeks to broaden and reward the young author's interest in writing, strengthen the self-confidence of beginning writers, and promote among all students a positive attitude towards literature. The magazine seeks manuscripts that grip the reader's interest and stir the heart or mind. While recognizing the need for mastery of standard grammar and usage, the editors are primarily interested in maintaining the authentic voice and presentation of young authors. Editorial revision is therefore minimal."

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Grossman, Florence. *Getting from Here to There: Writing and Reading Poetry*. Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc., 1982, 171 pp., $7.00. Reviewed by Gracie R. Preston.

For those teachers of English who have shied away from including poetry writing in the curriculum because they do not know where or even how to begin teaching it, Florence Grossman's *Getting from Here to There: Writing and Reading Poetry* tells you how. The book could be considered a "do it yourself" guide to writing your own poems. As a result of the simplified directions given by Grossman, detailed instruction on the part of the teacher is not required. The lessons are so simply constructed that students can use the book by themselves, following the guidelines given, to write good, acceptable poems.

Much of what Grossman advocates in teaching poetry writing follows the established writing process. She encourages having the proper classroom setting, one that is relaxed and conducive to learning. She suggests freewriting to get ideas flowing, and she emphasizes the importance of teachers writing with students. Grossman, like others who believe in the writing process, insists that there should be no emphasis placed on spelling, punctuation, etc. Students should be encouraged to write what they feel, to get ideas down without worrying about mechanics.

There are ten chapters in the book that represent lessons that can be taught. All of the lessons are geared to student experiences. The author begins each chapter with an explanation of the poetry topic and questions for discussion. Next, there are examples of poems written by contemporary poets on the topic. These poems are followed by additional questions for discussion and student examples of poems. Then, students are given instructions for writing their own poems.

While emphasis is not on meter and rhyme in the writing of poetry, there are instances when Grossman, through examples in poems, explains poetic devices, such as onomatopoeia, simile, and metaphor, without placing these terms in isolation for instruction. She includes lessons where students can write freely, making use of the forms "naturally."

At the end of the book, there are two additional chapters. One consists of ten comments that more or less sum up what a poem should do. It is entitled "Some Notes on Self Editing." The last chapter gives valuable suggestions on how to use the book in class.

Those teachers who do not see the value of teaching students to write poetry because student response has been boring and lacking in sophistication should try the strategies outlined in Grossman's book. There is no room for failure; the poetry topics are ones with which students can readily identify and get personally involved.

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Elizabeth A. Kahn, Carolyn Calhoun Walter, and Larry R. Johannessen. *Writing about Literature.* National Council of Teachers of English, 1984, 54 pp., $6.00 ($5.00, members). Reviewed by Judy Lawson.

The primary goal of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is to bridge the gap between educational theory and classroom practice. This goal has been achieved in the NCTE's recent publication, *Writing about Literature,* which reviews current educational theory and research on this topic and follows with descriptions of classroom activities to assist teachers in putting that theory into practice.

Because there is too often separate instruction and assessment of progress in reading, literature, and composition, reading is not integrated with literature, and composition instruction often does not include reading or the study of literary works, except as models of writing. *Writing about Literature* suggests a logical means of reducing this resulting fragmentation within the secondary English curricula first, by exploring the relationship between literature and composition, and second, by suggesting ways of designing instruction so that students write effectively about the literature they read.

The authors of *Writing about Literature* present much convincing evidence of the need to combine instruction in reading and writing. For example, they cite the 1979-80 National Assessment of Educational Progress in reading and literature, *Reading, Thinking, and Writing* (1981), whose results indicated the general inability of students to read critically or to support or explain their interpretations and responses to literature in any but the most superficial ways. Students at all levels do not appear to have learned how to look for evidence to support their judgments. Responses of students were superficial and limited and lacked strategies for analyzing or evaluating what they read.

According to the NAEP report, "17 year olds' papers became somewhat more like 13-year-olds' papers" (1981:3) during the 1970's. Over these last

ten years, students' skills in analyzing and writing about literature have seriously declined. The report goes on to say that schools have failed to teach more than 5-10% of the students to move beyond their initial reading of a text.

Clearly, after examining portions of the NAEP report and the other data provided by Kahn, Walter, and Johannessen, we must find new ways to teach students the skills and strategies to enable them to write effectively about the literature they read. With this in mind, the authors, in an effort to steer teachers away from the recitation mode, suggest activities requiring students to explain and defend their opinions at length, such as questioning in small groups.

Writing about Literature includes an excellent discussion of the basics necessary for interpreting literature, a taxonomy of skills in reading and interpreting fiction, and the skills that students need in writing to express interpretations. Also of special interest might be E. D. Hirsch, Jr.'s concept of "cognitive overload" (p. 8).

The very functional "Practice Section" provides a sequence of activities to help students develop the thinking processes essential for writing about literature. The activities "are designed to help students refocus their understanding of literature and turn it into a piece of analytic, persuasive writing. In each sequence students practice drawing conclusions, collecting evidence to support their conclusions, evaluating their evidence, and articulating the relationship between their evidence and their conclusions" (p. 9). The activities serve as a model for activity design and sequencing that teachers can easily follow.

The authors provide empirical evidence that when students participate in such activities as those included in part two of *Writing about Literature,* they achieve higher levels of comprehension and achieve significantly greater comprehension scores. The activities become progressively more open-ended in nature as students gain experience with the skills. The real beauty of these sequential exercises is the movement from more to less structure, from teacher-directed to student-independent activities. Unquestionably, the theory and research-based publication is sound and overwhelmingly convincing (especially at a time when school districts are concerned with test score results), and the practice section is a functional, concrete vehicle to guide students step-by-step through the skills necessary to write about literature.

Judy Lawson
teaches at Patrick Henry High School in Roanoke, Virginia.

Candy Carter, Chair, and the NCTE Committee on Classroom Practices in Teaching English. *Literature — News That Stays News: Fresh Approaches to the Classics.* National Council of Teachers of English, 120 pp., $8.50 ($6.65, members). Reviewed by John Baker.

In the Preface to *Literature — News that Stays News,* the NCTE Committee on Classroom Practices writes about their initial concern as to whether or not all the emphasis on the teaching of writing in the 80's has also resulted in more effective methods of teaching literature. The enthusiastic response to the Committee's call for manuscripts on the teaching of "old favorites," represented by the twenty-nine excellent selections compiled in this book, should not only confirm that teachers throughout the country *are* giving serious attention to the creative teaching of literature, but, and perhaps more importantly, should move educators to re-examine their own positions on the role of the classics in the English language arts curriculum.

Literature — News That Stays News is a collection of articles written by teachers who have enjoyed success with classic literary selections in kindergarten through college classrooms. The Committee on Classroom Practices has divided the book into five sections. The first contains discussions of units in which teachers have used a combination of titles, such as "Aristotle and the Declaration of Independence"; section two is a series of articles on "The Literature-Writing Connection"; and the last three parts focus on approaches to the classics at specific grade levels.

The Committee hopes that "this volume will help provide new methods to bring those old friends, the classics, into the lives of students" (ix). If any publication could fulfill such an aim, it is this book. "Fresh approaches" truly describes the teaching ideas presented in the articles; and more than being motivated to use these approaches with their own students, most readers, as they encounter the individual discussions, will probably find themselves thinking, "How I would love to sit in on this teacher's class!" I, for example, especially enjoyed David Tabler's dramatic method of teaching Plato's Simile of the Cave and Beverly Baker's discussion of how she uses paintings to teach the classics.

More than a valuable collection of teaching ideas, however, *Literature — News That Stays News* provides support for the argument that the classics should definitely be included in the K-13 curriculum. In her introduction to the book, Candy Carter expresses her belief that

> Classic books, like classic cars, classic clothes, and classical music, are always appealing. We find ourselves returning to these books like old friends. We are comfortable with them. We learn something new from them every time. And that is "news that stays news." (xii)

Sure, one may say, it is easy to make such a comment about books we love and want our students to enjoy, but it is a very different situation when we actually try to teach these works. The twenty-nine authors who share with us their approaches to the classics not only reinforce Ms. Carter's attitude but provide us with well-documented "success stories" of positive student responses to representative literary selections from ancient through modern times.

Readers should not be surprised to find in the articles such statements as "I try to help. . .students see the work's relevance to their own lives"

(113), "This approach may be the very novelty that will inspire your students to explore the classics with gusto" (13), and "The ultimate goal of this exercise is for students to recognize that *The Scarlet Letter* transcends its 1640's setting to raise timeless issues about the human condition" (116). In my reading of the book, however, I did not encounter any statement such as these that was not accompanied by a clearly described activity that could help achieve the goals we set for our students.

Moreover, the authors illustrate their awareness that teaching the classics demands what Jim Christ points out in "Exploring Emotion through *Romeo and Juliet*" (66-69): the teacher must match a classic work of literature to his or her class. The series of articles not only displays evidence of careful "matching," but also serious consideration of what Louise Rosenblatt in *Literature As Exploration* describes as a student's "intellectual and emotional readiness" for a literary selection. The presence of these preliminary concerns on the part of the authors is a primary reason why the book so successfully justifies teaching the classics.

I strongly recommend this book for all teachers of literature. Upon reading the articles, many will share my experience of reconsidering literary works that I previously found disappointing to teach or that I saw as too removed from the "modern" lives of my students. I appreciate the insight into teaching the classics that the book offers. The copy I read was borrowed; because *Literature—News That Stays News* is now a must for my personal library, I plan to purchase it immediately.

John Baker
is a doctoral student at Virginia Tech.

Lee Rockas. *Ways In: Analyzing and Responding to Literature.* Upper Montclair, New Jersey: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc., 1984, 196 pp., $7.60. Reviewed by Ruth Fisher.

Leo Rockas says in the preface to *Ways In: Analyzing and Responding to Literature* that "every reader brings something special to every literary work," then presents a series of analytical methods that aim at having all readers arrive at consensus responses. In this tedious text, Rockas offers little that is new in the art of literary criticism. Indeed, he goes to Aristotle's *Poetics* for the theoretical bases for his discussions of formal, rhetorical, and content analysis of works of literature.

Using excerpts from the diaries of Kafka, the short stories of Chekhov, and the poems of Robert Frost and Emily Dickinson that are appropriate to his purposes, Rockas gives step-by-step directions for the analysis of each area of formal, rhetorical, and content analysis. For example, in determining the principal rhetorical mode — description, narration, drama, or reverie — that an author has chosen to use, students should look carefully at subjects, predicates, and connective words. In description, the subject

is a person, a nonhuman thing, or the pronoun *it*; the predicate is form of the verb *to be*; the connective word is usually *and*. The subjects of narration are persons or animals and things treated as persons or the third person pronouns that replace them; predicates are vivid, lively verbs, usually in the past tense; the most frequently used connective word is *then*. The subjects of sentences in drama are nearly always persons; predicates are lively verbs and verbs of feeling almost always in the present tense; connections are made through a switch in tense, repetition, or question and answer. The first person is the subject of reverie; the predicate switches from past to future; connections in reverie are as conflicting as those in drama. Using this formula for determining the mode of rhetoric, the student should have little difficulty in making the correct choice.

Content analysis, according to Rockas, is "like trying to tell what's happening in a live body" (61). Then he begins to dissect the work, exploring in minute detail the elements of plot, setting, character, theme, diction, and sound. In his discussion of each of these six elements, Rockas first asks the readers to write down their own responses to and questions about the excerpt from a longer work or poem presented for study. He offers his own lengthy lists of questions for discussion. These thought-provoking questions demand that the student examine the piece in great detail. At the end of the list of questions, the students are given a creative response assignment such as adding details to the story that might explain some of the unanswered questions raised in the discussion, or adding a stanza to a poem using the same rhyme scheme as that used by the author. Rockas gives no indication as to how he uses the creative assignments.

Rockas does attempt to provide some avenues for individual responses in his questioning technique. For example, in discussing the theme of an excerpt from one of Kafka's diaries, he poses these questions:

> What does this account do to our possible belief or disbelief in a "death penalty" or capital punishment? Does the account permit us to continue thinking, "Well, for certain capital offenses, no punishment can be too inhumane?" Or is the story primarily set up to undermine a belief in capital punishment? Note the tense of the story suggests an ongoing, existing procedure — are we going to let it continue? True, most capital punishment isn't that bad, but doesn't it amount to murder, and does any society have a right to murder? (77)

Even though the student may take a stand on capital punishment in response to the questions, the questions assume that the respondent believes a certain way about capital punishment. The questions seem merely to set up the sides of the issue for a debate rather than to provide an opportunity for the student to respond to the excerpt in his or her own way.

Although Rockas says in the beginning that the responses of individuals are important, he says near the end of the book, "When students disagree in their judgment of a poem or play, it's possible that a more accurate explication or analysis of the work will bring them into closer agreement" (190). This statement seems to indicate that, for Rockas, there is a "correct" response to literary works and that response can be reached through careful instruction.

Some of the methods of analysis presented in *Ways In* can be used effectively in introducing the various genres of literature. For this reason, the text would be a useful resource for secondary teachers of literature.

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Carol J. Scott *Kentucky Daughter*. Clarion Books, 1985, 186 pp., $12.95. Reviewed by Robert Small.

In the past few years there seems to have been a revival of young adult novels set in the South. Authors like Sue Ellen Bridgers, Mildred Lee, Katherine Paterson, and Katie Letcher Lyle have turned young readers' attention back to the problems and rewards of growing up in the rural and small-town South. In the distant past (the 1940's and 50's, that is), this locale was often the setting for what were then called "junior novels." With the revolution in content that took place in books for teenagers in the 1960's and 70's, however, the favorite settings shifted to large urban and suburban areas as the favorite subjects shifted to drug addiction and broken families. Although this shift was not a total one — the Cleavers, for example, remained loyal to the Appalachian setting — it was pretty general. With books like *Far from Home, A Bridge to Terabithia,* and *Finders Weepers,* that rural Southern setting has returned, but more realistically portrayed.

A good recent example is Carol J. Scott's *Kentucky Daughter,* the story of Mary Fred Pratley's search for an education and, though she is not at first aware of it, for an understanding of herself as a worthwhile person, not despite of her rural Southern background but because of it. Alternately proud and ashamed of her heritage, she is forced to face her embarrassment about her country family when her mother weaves a coat for her fourteenth birthday, a heavy wool coat dyed green and bright orange. Before she has to decide whether or not to wear the coat, however, she leaves her Kentucky hill country home to stay with her uncle and aunt in Hampton in order to fulfill her dream of becoming an English teacher. Mary Fred's dream, interestingly for readers of the *Virginia English Bulletin,* has been inspired by her own English teacher, Mrs. Swiggett; and, in fact, one of Carol Scott's English teachers at Hampton High School was, yes, VATE's own Betty Swiggett.

When Mary Fred, who now wants to be called just Mary, enters high school in Hampton, she encounters the snobbish prejudice of a small group of students, who are, however, among the school leaders. She also has an encounter with her own English teacher, Mr. Dolsey. He uses a composition conference to make sexual advances to her; and she struggles to deal with the ugly incident, for a time seeing it as a further indication that people see her as worthless because they see her as a hillbilly, a redneck.

With the help of a new friend, Mattie, and especially Mattie's brother, Norman, Mary overcomes her deep sense of self doubt. When she learns that two other girls have complained about Mr. Dolsey and that one of them is Roberta, her chief enemy in the school, the last reason for her self doubt evaporates. After a visit to Williamsburg that includes both Norman and Mattie and a phone conversation with her mother to plan a Thanksgiving visit, Mary — now Mary Fred again — thinks of home:

> Back in bed, I thought for a long time about Mama's voice on the phone, cautious but happy. Mama had her hopes up high; I knew she did. And so did I. Warm and sleepy, I pulled the covers up snugly under my chin. Through the window, the lights of a Virginia street fell across the bright, cheerful colors of my Kentucky coat. (p. 186)

A realistic and sensitive portrayal of the struggles of a teenage girl to overcome those common teenage ailments, self doubt and family shame, *Kentucky Daughter* also makes clear how sexual abuse such as that inflicted on the three girls by Mr. Dolsey can undermine a person's feeling of worth. Both Mary Fred and Roberta react with anger but also with doubt, Mary Fred of the image people have of her because of her family and Roberta of the image people have of her as a trouble maker and, as she describes it, her reputation as a "slut." But like all successful novels, *Kentucky Daughter* is the story of an interesting person in whom all of us can see parts of ourselves.

Robert Small
is a faculty member in the College of Education at Virginia Tech.

Margaret Fleming and Jo McGinnis, Eds. *Portraits: Biography and Autobiography in the Secondary School.* National Council of Teachers of English, 1985, 104 pp., $7.20 (members, $6.00). Reviewed by William Yost.

Traditionally, in the literature classroom, biography and autobiography have suffered neglect at the hands of fiction and poetry. Although a good number of arguments may be found for studying these genres in the secondary classroom, their neglect usually boils down to the simple fact that the teacher lacks effective strategies for dealing with them aside from the conventional methods used in examining fiction — plot, character, setting, and theme.

Throughout the years, no text on teaching biography and autobiography has been readily available; additionally, methods or "how to" books offer little information for coping with these specialized genres. Margaret Fleming and Jo McGinnis, editors of *Portraits: Biography and Autobiography in the Secondary School,* acknowledged this problem, and with the help of co-authors, produced a book which enables the teacher to dig beyond the obvious with approaches suitable for either the English or social studies classroom.

In each of the eight approaches to studying biography and autobiography, *authors provide helpful guidelines for using* their approach as well as actual classroom procedures for one of two works — Maya Angelou's autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and Carl Sandburg's *Abe Lincoln Grows Up*. These procedures may be easily adapted to any work of biography or autobiography — in fact, they are suitable for fiction as well.

— The formal approach focuses on the traditional method of examining works of literature, emphasis on plot, character, setting, theme and style. Yet, unlike in the "true" traditional approach, these components of literature are not studied in isolation nor for their own sake; students are to view them in relation to their total effect on the work and to make application to their own lives. For instance, guidelines for using the approach call for students first to examine characters in the biographical work and then using the same approach examine people who have influenced their own lives.

— The linguistic approach provides an excellent linkage between grammar and literature study. Students are asked to count and classify such items as words, T-units, fragments, nouns, verbals, and inversions, and calculate ratios. Also, they are to look for schemes and tropes such as similes, metaphors, and alliteration. Although students may simply examine the effects of these items in the text, writing activities such as sentence imitation and sentence combining are natural outgrowths of this study, reinforcing the link between grammar, literature, and writing.

— The rhetorical approach helps students gain an appreciation of the biographer's art by examining the interweaving of narration, point of view, incident, character, setting, as well as the author's attempts at rational, emotional, and ethical appeal. Additionally, students, through this approach, may examine the narrator's attitude toward his subject, his intended audience, and his hidden messages or purposes. Through this approach, students gain organic insights into how the language really works.

— In the archetypal approach, students examine the characteristics of a person's life which make it a worthy subject of these genres, and thus learn of literary conventions. For instance, students may examine plot archetypes such as the miraculous birth or character archetypes such as the earth mother. Guidelines for implementing this approach call for students to apply their knowledge by creating a fictitious character using these archetypes.

— The sociological approach calls upon students' personal experiences (yes, even those of the slowest students) to examine cultural traits found in biographies and autobiographies. By using Bloom's Taxonomy as a basis, the teacher may encourage students to state the obvious as well as speculate upon the covert.

— The psychological approach allows students to examine the situational motivation of character action by concentrating on the tensions between Freud's Ego, Superego, and Id. For instance, students might contrast societal

restrictions which prevent characters from behaving in certain ways — Superego — with basic needs and desires — Id — which also motivate characters, perhaps constructing dialogues between the two contrasting forces.

— The historical approach helps students develop a context for critically examining the work by focusing on the life and times of the subject through research. Students might otherwise learn only of the time period in which the subject lived by accepting information in the work at face value. Students might create and describe clothing and furniture of the period, examine language of the period, or create newspaper articles describing events such as Lincoln's assassination.

Fleming and McGinnis acknowledge that teachers might be overwhelmed in attempting to apply all of these approaches to the study of a single biography or autobiography. They suggest that the teacher select what is appropriate for his or her own classroom; thus, the teacher concerned with a study of grammar and the English language might focus on the formal and linguistic approaches. The teacher concerned with a certain historical period in literature might use the activities suggested in the historical approach. Finally, composition teachers might use writing assignments found in all eight approaches to develop their own units.

Despite the strengths of *Portraits* and the approaches in general, the editors and authors have failed to consider some important work already existing for examining autobiography and biography. For instance, they neglected Carlsen's seven categories for examining biography and Murphy's prerequisite skills approach for reading and creating biography. Yet, the strengths of *Portraits* far outweigh these deficits. Whatever the need, teachers — both of language arts and social studies — will find worthwhile and thought-provoking approaches to studying biography and autobiography, previously neglected genres.

William Yost
is a teacher of English at Park Junior High High School in Raleigh County, West Virginia.

Charlotte K. Brooks, Ed. *Tapping Potential: English and Language Arts for the Black Learner*. National Council of Teachers of English, 1985, 330 pp., $13.00 ($10.00, members).

NCTE Public Information Office

Minority students may find school doors open today, but once inside, they often get too little help to succeed. This problem, pinpointed in *Barriers to Excellence* and other current reports on education, is the focus of a new book from the National Council of Teachers of English. *Tapping Potential: English and Language Arts for the Black Learner* combines the thinking of black educators within NCTE about what teachers and

administrators can do to prevent linguistic and cultural differences from isolating and discouraging black students.

Former NCTE president Charlotte K. Brooks, who edited the volume, notes that SAT and NAEP data support what scholars from various disciplines have concluded: that "blacks not only can, but do learn like any other group" if they are "properly taught by persons who understand their strengths, varying backgrounds, and potential for learning and who take into account historical, socioeconomic, psychological, and linguistic barriers."

In *Tapping Potential*, 43 teachers and professors from NCTE's Black Caucus discuss what is known from research and experience about effective teaching approaches for black students in school and college. Their essays are grouped in sections on language and dialect, reading, writing, and literature.

Among the contributors to this volume are Darwin T. Turner, Geneva Smitherman, Dorothy Strickland, Miriam Chaplin, Haki Madhubuti, Paul A. Ramsey, William W. Cook, Rosalie Black Kiah, Mildred A. Hill-Lubin, and Marie H. Buncombe. The writers stress that black students can cope with the unfamiliar cultural environment of school so long as teachers help them believe in themselves as capable language users. Among their insights are these:

> There is a persistent tendency among educators to equate linguistic difference with difference in ability to learn and to form ideas.
>
> Black language does not (as is widely believed) impede the learning of standard English. A single methodology will not serve the needs of every black learner.
>
> What may appear as dullness on the part of some black students can actually be resignation, stemming from their sense of invisibility in the classroom.
>
> When poverty is added to cultural difference, the school must work twice as hard to engage the individual learner.
>
> The so-called dialect problems of black college students in writing classes often stem from inadequate knowledge of how to structure a piece of writing.

Discussions of broad issues alternate with specific suggestions about classroom methods and techniques. A number of essayists offer bibliographies for further reading.

Reviewed by Daisy F. Reed

The preface of this excellent book explains that although black students still receive low reading and writing scores on standardized tests, they have made significant improvements, and it is believed the trend is clearly upward. Recent reports indicate that test scores for blacks are now rising at a faster rate than for students of other races.

This improvement is being attributed to compensatory education programs that were instituted in the 1960's and 1970's. It also substantiates what educators and others have been saying for some time about black

education. Black students can learn like any other group of students when they are taught by persons who understand their potential for learning and who take into account the many barriers to achievement these students face.

And that, the editor states, is the major purpose of the book. The book presents information, based upon research experience, to help teachers of black students on all levels to use approaches and methods found to be appropriate to blacks. Many of the theories and methods are also applicable to all learners.

The book contains forty-one articles written by thirty-seven authors and is divided into four sections. Section I is "Language" and contains articles on language, dialect, and the teaching-learning process. "Black English Dialect and the Classroom Teacher" is an example of the fine essays found in this section. It discusses myths and facts about distinctive features of black dialect. Particularly interesting were the comparisons of black dialect to other dialects including Irish, Scottish, Pennsylvania Dutch, and Yiddish.

Section II of the book is "Reading" and contains articles with focus ranging from preschool through college. Section III is "Writing" and contains articles about current writing studies and practical classroom practices. Most of the essays in these two sections are well written and all are informative.

My favorite article in the book is in Section IV, "Literature." It is "The Afro-American Griot," which is a scholarly discourse on the style, message, and performance of the old-time black preacher. It is written in such a manner that as I read it, I could envision the black preachers of my childhood. The descriptions of the singing, moaning, gesturing, pantomiming, dancing, and chanting brought smiles of nostalgia to my face. I reread it several times! Besides nostalgia the essay provides readers with a well-researched explanation of the black preacher's oratory style and its effect on the audience. This legacy has been passed on to such modern day orators as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Jesse Jackson. It is an art that is worthy of preservation.

As with any compilation of essays by different authors, the writing is uneven. There are very erudite, scholarly discourses followed by pragmatic descriptions of actual teaching strategies. This is an observation not a criticism. It would have been useful, however, to have more information about the various authors. This would have helped to clarify some of the points made and would have provided a context for the opinions presented.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and highly recommend it to all who teach black students. It should be a required reading in language arts courses. The book is also a must for anyone who is interested in "language" itself.

Daisy Reed

is associate professor of middle education at Virginia Commonwealth University and a former teacher in the Washington, DC, Public Schools.

Editor's Note:

Over the years, certain schools in Virginia have participated in NCTE's Achievement Awards in Writing, but many schools have not. Nationally and within the state there is an increasing emphasis on effective teaching of writing, and in Virginia and many other states, Writing Projects have helped to raise the level of writing instruction. Participation in the Achievement Awards program is one way of demonstrating a commitment to effective teaching of writing and, of course, a way to recognize those student writers who have mastered the art of writing to a high degree. The best student writers in the best instructional programs in the state can never be recognized by NCTE if the school fails to participate. Below is reprinted NCTE's description of the program. NCTE members in a school who belong to the Secondary Section receive this and the Nomination Form. If a school has not received the form, a call (217-328-3870) or letter to NCTE Headquarters should bring a copy quickly. Last spring VATE published selections from the writings of Virginia's winning students in 1984. That volume, *Anthology of Student Writing*, was so well received that this past year's winners will also be published.

Achievement Awards in Writing, 1986

Nominations must be sent to NCTE by January 23, 1986

To encourage high school students in their writing and to recognize publicly some of the best student writers in the nation, the National Council of Teachers of English will give achievement awards in writing to over eight hundred students in 1987. This marks the twenty-ninth consecutive year that NCTE has sponsored the Achievement Awards. The National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed the program on its advisory list of national contests and activities for 1985-86.

Copies of this brochure and nomination blanks have been sent to 18,400 high school English department heads and to members of NCTE's secondary section. One or two nomination blanks accompany each brochure. If additional blanks are needed, photocopies may be made or more blanks may be obtained from NCTE.

Nature of Awards

A maximum of 876 awards is possible; they are announced in October when student nominees have entered their senior year in high school.

Recipients of awards and the English departments from which they were nominated receive certificates of commendation from the National Council of Teachers of English. These certificates are sent to high school principals of the winners.

Because NCTE is a not-for-profit educational association, it has no funds to award scholarships to winners. Their names and addresses, however, are printed in a booklet that is mailed in October to directors of admissions and freshman studies in 3,000 colleges, universities, and junior colleges in the United States. Accompanying each booklet is a letter in which NCTE recommends the winners for college admission and for financial assistance, if needed. Booklets are also sent to state supervisors of English, to NCTE affiliate organizations, and to the winners and their high school principals.

Every state in the nation is represented among the award recipients. Each state is allowed at least two winners; the specific number is proportionate to the state's population. In addition to the fifty states, the District of Columbia is allowed four winners. Canadian schools and American schools abroad make up a separate category entitled to two winners.

Eligibility

Only students who are JUNIORS in the academic year of 1985-86 may be nominated for 1986 awards; they must be candidates for high school graduation 1987. This stipulation is made so that the booklet naming the winners reaches colleges in time for students to be considered for admission and scholarships in 1987. High school juniors from public, private, and parochial schools in the United States and Canada, as well as from American schools abroad, are eligible.

Number of Nominees

The number of nominees allowed from each school is determined by the current total enrollment in grades 10, 11, and 12:

Under 500 students	1 nominee
500-999 students	2 nominees
1000-1499 students	3 nominees
1500-1999 students	4 nominees
2000-2499 students	5 nominees
2500-2999 students	6 nominees
3000-3999 students	7 nominees
4000 or more students	8 nominees

The enrollment figure used must be an official one from administrative reports of the current year and must not include ninth-grade students.

Nomination Procedures

Each high school selects its own nominee or nominees: one or more juniors agreed upon by the English department, not chosen by an individual teacher. One method of selection is to form a committee of high school students and teachers to act as judges in a local preliminary contest to select the best junior writer or writers to represent the school in the NTCE Achievement Awards.

In selecting these young writers, teachers may want to consider the following standards: Does the student show depth of thought in the quality and presentation of ideas? Even if the thought is relatively commonplace, has the student made the idea his or her own? Is the student clear about subject and audience? Does the student demonstrate a command of vocabulary and sentence structure? Perhaps the comprehensive question is whether or not the writer exhibits power to inform and move an audience through control of a large range of the English language. This may, but does not necessarly, imply excellence in what is usually called "creative" writing, and the judging committees may be as favorably impresses by an expository article as by a poem. A prospective nominee need not express a desire to major in English.

A current official nomination blank for each nominee must be submitted to NTCE, postmarked no later than January 23, 1986. **Only one student may be nominated on each blank. No substitutions will be accepted after the January 23 deadline.** All nomination blanks from a school should be mailed to NCTE **in the same envelope** and **only one teacher** should be designated to receive the follow-up instructions in March. All information requested on the nomination blank must be provided.

The Entries: Two Written Compositions

1. An impromptu theme written under teacher supervision in no more than 75 minutes and submitted in long-hand without revision. The topic is designated by NCTE.

2. One sample of writing (prose or verse) that the student considers his or her best work, regardless of amount of revision. The "best writing" should not exceed ten typed, double-spaced pages. Research papers, term papers, or novels **will not** be accepted by state coordinators. Unlike the impromptu theme, the sample of best writing does not depend on information from NCTE. As soon as a student is nominated, therefore, he or she may begin work on the sample of best writing.

Nominees must submit both entries. The impromptu theme topic along with further instructions is sent in March to the teacher designated on the nomination blank. If the topic is not received by **April 1,** contact NCTE Achievement Awards. Both entries must be submitted to the state coordinator in one package, postmarked no later than April 21, 1986. Names and addresses of state coordinators are included in the instructions sent in March.

No entries are returned. Teachers or students should make copies of the compositions before submitting the originals. No publication of a student's work will be made without his or her prior written permission.

Judging of Entries

Teams of judges from the nominee's state, consisting of both high school and college English teachers, evaluate the entries for content and form. Each piece of writing is read by two judges. A state coordinator organizes the network of judges in each state and reports the results to NCTE.

Queries

Address queries to Achievement Awards in Writing, National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

Neglect of Oral Language in U.S. Schools Retards Learning, NCTE President Says

Neglect of the important skills of speaking and listening throughout education creates problems for students emerging from our schools today, says Sheila Fitzgerald, president of the National Council of Teachers of English. A professor in the Department of Teacher Education at Michigan State University, Fitzgerald says this problem was evident when she recently assigned an oral essay exam in one of her classes.

"My students were college juniors and future teachers," she comments. "They were given all of the questions ahead of time and told that rather than writing the answers, they'd be asked to speak to the group about a few of the topics they had studied. This challenge disturbed a number of them. Yet soon they will have to be on their feet before groups of people." As teachers, they will have to explain school programs to parents, defend their curriculum decisions to administrators, and discuss instructional programs with other faculty. Students going into other careers will also have to explain their ideas coherently to other people.

"I am concerned," Fitzgerald says. "Certainly our teacher education programs have failed to give students enough opportunities to practice speaking in situations where they're put on the spot. We have failed to assess students' oral language competencies as they progress through teacher education, to make sure they are growing." Teacher certification today, she adds, tends to stress only the ability to teach reading.

Ideally, oral language development begins at home, Fitzgerald says, with a lot of talk between parents and preschoolers. Too often, school poses the challenge of learning *not* to speak. Order is necessary in classrooms, of course, but random chatter isn't the issue.

"John Goodlad's research in 38 schools in major regions of the U.S. showed that the chance of observing discussion going on in primary grade classrooms was only 5.3 percent," Fitzgerald points out. "In upper elementary, discussion jumped to 7.7 percent. In junior high, the figure went down to 4.2 percent; in senior high it was 5.1 percent. And much of that discussion involved the whole class; many students probably said nothing.

"Most of my students may have attended schools where children were expected chiefly to listen and not speak," Fitzgerald comments. "Their high school programs perhaps required only one speech course, with the emphasis on formal speechmaking rather than extemporaneous give-and-take. In large universities especially, students are subjected to lectures for the most part, with minimal opportunities to interact with their peers or their professors." Research shows that students in this passive role actually lose in listening skills as they move up through secondary school.

This article was supplied by the NCTE Public Information Office.

Recent reports on education reform call oral language a basic competency for all students, citing the College Board's *Academic Preparation for College*, and *Academic Preparation for the World of Work*. Among administrators and teachers she sees the beginnings of a new understanding of "the importance of listening and speaking in everyday life and the significant role they play in developing reading and writing skills." What should be done to help students speak and listen?

"Parents should look for oral language opportunities in their children's school programs and expect the school to provide them," Fitzgerald says. Administrators need to remember that a quiet classroom is not a sure sign of good teaching. "They must learn to value student interaction and encourage teachers to use it.

"We need to place a much higher priority on the arts in education," the NCTE president stresses, "because the arts involve students not only in aesthetic experiences but also in interaction with peers. No wonder John Goodlad found that students like arts and physical education best. These are subjects that involve them in interaction."

Texts and other classroom materials must be changed, Fitzgerald says. "Commercial textbooks tend to suggest oral language activities not as standard teaching approaches to a topic but as optional enrichment activities. And students now spend too much time on workbook exercises."

Teaching must change, she insists. "Because our curriculum tends to be test-driven and because oral competencies are not conveniently tested with paper and pencil, speaking and listening get quietly pushed aside."

Finally, teachers need better opportunities to learn and to practice the skills of teaching through small-group discussion. In teacher education, this will take more course time to emphasize methods for speaking and listening and more practice in actual classrooms. "Methods must go beyond building children's confidence," she says. "They must help students speak with clarity and form and style, as well as listen critically and appreciatively."

Experienced teachers must also have opportunities to learn new methods. "The teaching of small-group discussion skills is complex, but it's possible for a well prepared teacher to introduce students to this activity in small pieces. At first, teachers need to make the discussion time short, limit the topic, and connect it to students' own experience, so they will have more to say.

"Perhaps you're studying the westward movement of American pioneers. To start small-group discussions, a teacher could ask, 'Have you ever known a family that moved far away from their community? In what ways was their move different and less difficult than the moves families made in covered wagons to the western frontier?'

"Endless numbers of ideas can be spun off from this comparison. Students of all abilities can comment. There are few absolutely right and wrong answers. Students get a chance to reason, to relate concepts. They can challenge each other and disagree about what it would really be like. They start immediately to use what they are learning. When they have to verbalize about a subject, they really begin to understand it."

ERIC/RCS Update: The Phonics Wars

Compiled by Charles Suhor and Deborah Fox

The role of phonics in reading instruction is one of the most enduring conflicts in education. The response of the National Academy of Education's prestigious Commission on Reading (*Becoming a Nation of Readers*; Richard Anderson, et al., annotated below) took a balanced position on the phonics issue — and on the other questions in which research is inconclusive and scholarly disagreements are tinged with ideology. Specifically, the commission endorsed phonics instruction "both in isolation and in words" but held that phonics instruction must be "well designed"; "kept simple"; applied immediately in "meaningful selections"; extended through wide application to known words; and typically "completed by the end of second grade."

This update gives samples of recent materials on phonics instruction found in the ERIC data base. The annotations give some evidence of the variety of viewpoints in the profession. Clearly, one writer's myth is another's reality. But as Lewis Thomas has noted, scholarship has always thrived on continuing dialectic, with the bulk of evidence ultimately reaching a critical mass that provides the most useful — though not necessarily the "final" — answer to our questions.

ANNOTATIONS

Two Approaches to Reading: Whole-Language and Skills. Dorothy J. Watson, and others. International Reading Association, Atlanta, GA, May 6-10, 1984, 42 pp.

This study describes two reading instruction procedures stemming from two different theoretical influences. Two teachers, one skills-oriented and one whole language-oriented, were selected on the basis of peer and administrator recommendation. Their stated theoretical orientations were measured using the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile. Data were collected from video tapes and from teacher journals. The results analyzed questions such as these: On what unit of our language and linguistic system did the teacher focus the children's attention? What aspects of reading were emphasized? Was the reading material contingent on the student or teacher? What attitude toward reading specific texts did the teacher encourage? In every category of observable data, the teachers adhered closely to their theoretical models. In diametric opposition to the instructional position of the skills teacher, the whole-language teacher focused children's attention on the largest unit of language suitable for the situation. Consistent with

language experience approaches to instruction, she encouraged the children to construct meaning sensible to them and their lives, permitted deviations from texts in allowing miscues, involved children in planning, used library books and other texts, and encouraged children to "think about and feel" what they read. (ED 247 546; MF01, PC02 plus postage.)

Myths of Reading Instruction. Revised Edition. Patrick Groff. 1985, 300 pp.

This book analyzes selected teaching practices that have been supported by many reading experts but not by research findings. In the first 12 chapters, Groff describes the following as "myths" of reading: (1) phonics hinders comprehension; (2) unpredictable spelling invalidates phonics; (3) children learning to read should first be taught whole, or sight, words; (4) reading is best taught in sentences; (5) context clues are all-important to beginning readers; (6) word length makes no difference in beginning reading instruction; (7) learning modalities and instruction should be matched for children to learn best; (8) letter names are unimportant; (9) children need to be taught dictionary syllabication to help them acquire reading skills; (10) reading tests should be replaced with oral reading miscue analysis; (11) subvocalization is bad; and (12) oral reading is dangerous. The rest of the book discusses why the myths prevail and how they can be dispelled, and presents an annotated bibliography of reviews of research in phonics. (ED 254 831; MF01, PC12 plus postage.)

A Whole-Language, Comprehension-Centered Reading Program. Program in Language and Literacy Occasional Paper Number 1. Kenneth S. and Yetta M. Goodman. 1981, 27 pp.

Intended for reading teachers and school administrators, this paper proposes a whole language, comprehension-based approach to reading instruction that is rooted in the humanistic acceptance of the learner as problem solver and that builds on strengths and minimizes preoccupation with reading deficiency and remediation. Following an introduction and rationale for this holistic approach, the authors outline the key principles of the approach relating to the reading process, teaching and learning, and instructional materials. They then examine the myths of reading readiness, controlled vocabulary, phonics, and mastery learning. They go on to describe the essentials of an in-school program that draws on the learning taking place outside school, exploring preschool learning and progressing through initial reading instruction and developmental reading. (ED 210 630; MF01, PC02 plus postage.)

Phonics Revisited: Toward an Integrated Methodology. Morton Botel and JoAnn T. Seaver. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Keystone State Reading Association, Hershey, PA, November 11-14, 1984, 18 pp.

In the context of whole language learning, the teaching of phonics can be approached in two different ways. In one situation, the teacher engages children in composing with a purpose and for an audience, during which time the children become aware of graphophonic relationships through their need to spell words. In the other situation, the teacher engages the children

in choral reading and language play that proceeds from a carefully chosen or specially constructed folk rhyme to sentence investigation, to phonic investigation, and, finally, to mastery of the CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) syllable pattern in single and multisyllabic words.

In both of these whole language situations, the complex tasks of writing and reading are taught first by engaging children in the task itself and then by having them differentiate language into component parts. In the reading task, the differentiation proceeds from the teacher presenting a chant or folk rhyme which includes words containing repetition of certain graphophonic patterns. In the writing task, the differentiation proceeds from children writing purposefully for an audience to becoming more aware of the graphophonic system as they solve the problem of how to spell correctly. In either situation, the instruction integrates things usually taught separately — phonics, spelling, and the study of sentences. This integrated approach makes appropriate use of phonics and allows more time to be devoted to purposeful reading, writing, and dialoguing in all subject areas. (ED 252 819; MF01; PC02, plus postage.)

Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading. Richard C. Anderson, and others. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Center for the Study of Reading; Washington, DC: National Academy of Education. 1985. 155 pp.

Fulfilling a need for careful synthesis of an extensive body of findings on reading, this report presents experts' interpretations of both current knowledge of reading and the state of the art of reading instruction. The introduction contains two claims: (1) the knowledge is now available to make worthwhile improvements in reading throughout the United States, and (2) if the practices seen in the classrooms of the best teachers in the best schools could be introduced everywhere, reading improvement would be dramatic. The first chapter stresses reading as the process of constructing meaning from written texts, a complex skill requiring coordination of interrelated sources of information. The second chapter, on emerging literacy, argues that reading must be seen as part of a child's general language development and not as a discrete skill isolated from listening, speaking, and writing. The third chapter, on extending literacy, stresses that as proficiency develops, reading should not be thought of as a separate subject but as integral to learning in all content areas. The fourth chapter concerns the teacher and the classroom and notes that an indisputable conclusion of research is that the quality of teaching makes a difference in children's learning. The next two chapters note that standardized reading tests do not measure everything and that teaching is a complex profession. The last chapter contains seventeen recommendations for conditions likely to produce citizens who would read with high levels of skill and do so frequently and with satisfaction. In the afterword, Jeanne Chall comments on the history of the report, and three appendixes contain 260 references and notes, plus lists of project consultants. (ED 253 865; MF01, PC07 plus postage. Also available from the University of Illinois, P.O. Box 2774, Station A,

Champaign, IL 61820-8774; $4.50 each, including postage; overseas orders, add $1.00.)

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ERIC/RCS Update: Teaching Thinking Skills in English/Language Arts

Compiled by Fran Lehr

A number of commentaries on public education, including that of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, have expressed concern that students lack the ability necessary to think clearly. A survey of documents recently entered into the ERIC data base shows that educators are beginning to address this problem in a variety of ways. Annotations of a few of those documents, which describe methods of teaching thinking skills in the English/language arts classroom, are presented below.

ANNOTATIONS

Writing to Think. National Writing Project Occasional Paper No. 4. Marlene Griffith. National Writing Project, 5635 Tolman Hall, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720, 1982, 14 pp.

Intended for middle-elementary through college level writing teachers, this booklet describes a teaching method that lets students write their own ways into ideas, merging personal experience with intellectual thought into expository writing. The booklet first describes in greater detail the concept of writing-to-think as focused free writing — required but not graded or revised — that allows students to bring vague perceptions to a verbal level explicit enough for them to reconsider or extend. Griffith then presents and discusses four writing samples (two from students who write with ease and two who have difficulty) to illustrate different kinds of mindwork made possible by this kind of thinking on paper. (ED 251 842; MF01, plus postage; PC available from publisher.)

GEMS: Gifted Education Module System. Higher Level Thinking in the Junior High. Hilarie Davis and others. State University of New York, Brockport College at Brockport, 1981, 114 pp.

This guide presents units of instruction that emphasize the higher level thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. An introductory section explains each of the three higher level skills and presents tasks illustrating each. It then offers complete units in English, math, science, and social studies. The English unit deals with characterization, focusing on description through analysis of elements, ordering cause and effect relationships in character actions, contrasting relationships, and examining character credibility. (ED 216 473; MF01, PC05 plus postage.)

Enriched Upper Elementary Language Arts Unit: Logical Thinking, Grades 5-6. Bulletin No. 345-D. Tom Braunreiter. Beloit Public Schools, Wisconsin, 1982, 110 pp.

Intended for use with gifted and talented students, this guide contains lesson plans that focus on logical thinking enrichment activities. Each plan contains objectives, necessary entry skills, teaching approaches, student activities, resources, and follow-up and evaluation suggestions. Plans are presented for a number of areas, including (1) completing analogies and determining analogous relationships, (2) identifying similarities, (3) learning to be concise, (4) noting inconsistencies, (5) building a case by logically sequencing material, (6) understanding and verifying inferences, (7) identifying and completing syllogisms, and (8) computing probability. (ED 228 816, MF01, PC05 plus postage.)

Philosophy for Children: An Approach to Critical Thinking. Fastback 206. Tony W. Johnson. Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, Bloomington, IN, 1984, 41 pp.

Johnson describes curriculum and resources that foster and expand the philosophical thinking of elementary and middle school students. Following a discussion of Matthew Lipman's illustrative "novel" *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* (which helps students explore both formal and informal rules of thought), Johnson describes the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, founded by Lipman at Montclair State College, New Jersey. The remainder of the booklet describes various aspects of the Institute's program, specifically its efforts to develop curriculum designed to expand reasoning skills, beginning in early childhood education with reasoning in language comprehension and followed by skills in ethics, language arts, and social studies. (ED 242 629; MF $0.97, PC $3.90, plus postage)

Teaching Critical Thinking Skills in the Public Speaking Course: A Liberal Arts Perspective. Paul A. Fritz and Richard L. Weaver, II. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Chicago, IL, Nov. 1-4, 1984, 36 pp.

Looking at elements of classic rhetoric, Fritz and Weaver review the literature to discover the thinking skills involved in invention, organization, composition, memory, and delivery. They conclude that students need critical thinking skills that will help them expand perspectives, draw themes together, draw conclusions, present organized data consistent with audience expectations, and write in oral style. Labeling these as framing, scenario, prescription, and imagining skills, the authors present exercises designed to assist students to develop each skill within a public speaking course. They also offer suggestions for testing critical thinking. (ED 249 556; MF01, PC02 plus postage.)

How Can We Teach Intelligence? Robert J. Sternberg. Philadelphia, PA: Research for Better Schools, Inc., 1983, 33 pp.

Sternberg describes his "componential" theory of intelligence, which explains intelligence in terms of three types of component process that make intelligence performance: (1) metacomponents, the higher order or executive processes that individuals use to plan what they are going to do, monitor what they are doing, and evaluate what they have done; (2) performance components, which carry out what the metacomponents have planned; and (3) knowledge-acquisition components, which are used in learning new material. Sternberg argues that, if intelligence can be broken down into this set of underlying processes and strategies for combining the processes, it is possible to intervene at the level of the mental process, teach individuals what processes to use, when and how to use them, and how to combine them into workable strategies for task solution. He describes three programs that train aspects of the theory — Feurstein's "Instrumental Enrichment," Lipman's "Philosophy for Children," and "Chicago Mastery Learning: Reading" — and offers guidelines for use in choosing a thinking skills training program. (ED 242 700; MF01, PC02 plus postage.)

The ERIC/RCS Clearinghouse has several publications related to the topic. These include three ERIC Digests: *Thinking Skills in English and across the Curriculum, Metacomprehension,* and *Learning across the Curriculum,* all ERIC Digests, and *Questioning: A Path to Critical Thinking,* a TRIP (Theory and Research into Practice) booklet prepared by Leila Christenbury and Patricia P. Kelly.

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How to Kill a Writer

John C. Maxwell

When I was in seventh grade, we used scratch pens designed by someone in the nineteenth century but kept in use well into the twentieth by someone convinced that the inconvenience of that pen would be good for our character. Our desks had little inkwells, into which the janitor pumped a jet of black ink once a week.

In front of me were the long, thick braids of Gwendolyn Kiev. The proximity of her braids to the inkwells was too much temptation. Into my inkwell went the tip of her braid. A moment later the black ink began sweeping a curved line across her blouse. I was fascinated and terrified. I knew what was coming.

At four o'clock that afternoon, with the sounds of my friends on the playground, I sat at my desk, scratch pen in hand, writing again and again, "I will respect other people's rights." I wrote that sentence 100 times, and after the first rendition, I paid no attention to its meaning. Something else may have been happening to me — something pretty bad. I'm not sure about it, but I could very well have been learning to hate writing.

I remembered that childhood incident during a discussion at the Annual Business Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English last fall. Before us was a resolution decrying the use of writing as punishment. I mused: Can this be? Can teachers still be punishing children and youths by having them write the same sentence over and over? Or even forcing them to compose a rueful paragraph for their sins? (The latter is less mindless, but it still implies that the best way to punish kids is to make them write.)

Teachers speaking to this issue assured me that, yes, there are such teachers. And what a terrible thing it is that they do. By such actions, teachers can quickly undo the hard work of teachers of English language arts who struggle to persuade young people that writing is an enjoyable human experience, a way of sharing ideas with friends and schoolmates, a way of phrasing both the expressible and the virtually inexpressible thoughts that course through all our heads.

Writing is the last of the language arts to develop. As most of us know from spending a lifetime learning how to write, early experiences are critical to later development. If even a part of one's first experience with writing is painful, the road to competency in written language is made immeasurably

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harder. We are a nation that, by and large, is afraid of writing. Many of us will go to considerable lengths to avoid it. Why is this so?

A witty but wise teacher of writing once said to me, "Writing is an unnatural act. It is a laborious, painful, wrenching craft to learn under the best of circumstances." One is tempted to agree after watching a ten-year-old boy hunched over his desk, forcing his hand and eye to work together, all the energy normally given to throwing baseballs intensely focused on the page. Little does he know that at 40, he will still be learning to write.

The general conduct of writing instruction in this country has been unhealthy for a long, long time. Recently, with the support of extensive research on what is called the writing process, teachers have begun to modify their approach to make the teaching and learning of writing a more natural, satisfying experience. But for many students, still, the purpose of writing appears to be simply to give the teacher something to bloody up with a red pencil. Without intending to, many teachers breed distrust and fear of writing.

With the passage of corporal punishment in schools, it is possible that writing as punishment has taken the place of the principal's paddle. For dipping Gwendolyn's braids into the inkwell, I might have been given three wallops on my hind end. In retrospect, that might have been a more fitting and less harmful punishment. One must ask: How enlightened is a school that, on the one hand, works hard to develop the skills of written expression and on the other hand destroys any liking for composition by using it to punish students for minor infractions?

I admit I know of no research telling how much writing as punishment is going on. But responses to my own straw polls of NCTE members and staff suggest that writing as punishment is not nearly so uncommon as I had thought.

How much better it would be to punish students by merely making them sit there with their hands folded. Or what about having children read their punishment statements into a tape recorder? To avoid tedium, they could try to read the sentence a different way each time and develop their capacity to interpret the written word. Or have them do push-ups.

But making them write mindlessly and painfully only invites the kind of distaste for writing that shows up in the behavior of too many adults. It's about time we policed ourselves by driving this insane practice out of the schools. Too much is at stake. If we ever expect to become a nation of writers, we must stamp out writing as punishment as soon as possible.

This is an appeal to all readers of *Education Week* to keep an eye out for instances of writing as punishment. Let teachers of all subjects at all levels know that there are other socially acceptable ways to punish young people for infractions, and that they can contribute to the national effort to improve student writing by using other methods of punishment.

While you're at it, tell all teachers they also have a positive responsibility. The English teacher's task is to teach writing, but all other teachers must

support the development of writing skills by calling on all students to write as a natural part of the work in all classes. The much-needed renaissance in learning to write can happen only when everyone involved recognizes that true skill develops only through continuous writing practice.

At least, no one should ever kill the budding writer by using writing as punishment.

Letters to Parents and Legislators Concerning Class Size; Call for Descriptions of Successful Attempts at Reducing Class Size

Charles Suhor

Among the actions recommended by the NCTE Task Force on Class Size was that the Council engage the rich resources of thousands of affiliate members to make a concerted effort to improve conditions for teaching English. To this end, the Task Force developed model letters we hope you and your colleagues will send to parents and state legislators, explaining the importance of manageable workload and class size for teachers of English and language arts. In endorsement of that recommendation, the NCTE Executive Committee urges you to work with your members towards grass roots efforts at persuading the parents and state legislators that class size should be reduced.

The time seems especially ripe for developing local-level campaigns because of the current high interest in the teaching of writing (and the time involved in teacher feedback) and because action has already been taken in some districts and states to reduce the size of English classes. But of course, the vast majority of secondary level teachers in our country are still teaching well over 100 students, and most elementary classrooms are well over the recommended maximum class size of 20. The letters are intended as idea-starters. You are encouraged to adapt them to local needs and audiences in whatever ways you think are useful.

The Executive Committee also would like the Council to gather information about "success stories" in reduction of class size. If you are among those who have reaped the benefits of smaller class size — from building-level reductions to state mandates — would you write a brief description of how this came about? Send the information to Ron Marostica, Director of Affiliate Relations, NCTE. Or you can call Ron, and he will make notes on your comments. We hope to be able to disseminate information about successful strategies at a future date, and Ron will be collecting your ideas.

Finally, you should know that other actions have been taken with regard to class size. The report of the Task Force on Class Size is currently being

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Charles Suhor is Deputy Executive Director of NCTE. This article was supplied by the NCTE Public Information Office.

prepared as a book prospectus. The NCTE Research Foundation has invited a group of researchers to present proposals for studies that explore the relation of class size to English instruction. CSSEDC is polling its membership concerning class size and workload in their schools. We hope that a groundswell of popular interest and research in class size and English will result in positive benefits for the profession.

Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parent,

The National Council of Teachers of English has for seventy-five years proclaimed that the optimum size of an English class is 20 students and that secondary school English teachers should teach no more than 100 students per day. The Council believes that these provisions are necessary for effective instruction in the English language arts.

- *Practicing teachers as well as expert observers and administrators know by experience that smaller classes create the possibility of more individual attention, fewer discipline problems, a better balance of cooperation and competition, and a more humane environment for learning than is possible in overcrowded classrooms.*
- *Furthermore, studies have shown that students can learn many valuable skills in smaller classes: cooperative group behavior, self-control, respect for others, good study habits, speaking and listening skills, critical thinking, reading and writing skills, and discussion with others as part of the learning process.*
- *Research on class size indicates — and teachers and students concur — that smaller classes can lead to higher achievement because students can have more attention, more time for work, better diagnosis of their needs, and better planning to meet those needs.*
- *Finally, teachers know that smaller classes allow them more time to prepare varied lesson plans and relate more closely to students in ways that encourage motivation, self-esteem, and growth. Because of such successful working conditions, teachers enjoy teaching more and thus remain more effective and continue in the profession rather than leave for other work.*

Despite this evidence, classes are still large, some even as large as 40 students. Many reasons are given for these large classes, but the three most often used are critical financial shortages, lack of "definitive" research results, and absence of public understanding and thus public influence.

If you want your child to get individual attention and to learn under the best conditions all of the skills necessary to achieve academically and personally, you can begin by inquiring about the size of English classes in your public schools. Then you can make your voice heard and your desires known.

Both the National Council of Teachers of English and your local English teachers' organization can give you additional information. We urge you to help in a joint effort to improve your children's learning and achievement.

Sincerely,

Sample Letter to Legislators

Dear _____ :

The improvement of public education has become an urgent priority not only for the survival of this important American institution but also for the betterment of society. Legislators have made and will continue to make key decisions about what will be done to improve public education.

All reports agree on the importance of improved English and language arts programs in school reform. Reading, writing, listening, speaking, and critical thinking are the most important skills in work of any school. Real reform will depend on vigorous, well-structured, carefully implemented English and language arts programs.

One of the key issues in reform and striving for excellence is assuring a learning environment in which such well-conceived programs can be implemented. Class size is an important factor in this environment. For over seventy years, the National Council of Teachers of English has urged the optimum class size of 20 students and, at the secondary level, a total student to teacher ratio not exceeding 100 to 1.

The reasons for this strong stand are many: the need for the individual student to receive diagnosis and remediation — especially in the crucial area of writing; more time on task (leading to mastery of skills and subject matter); a balance of cooperation and competition in group activities to promote leadership, self-control, respect, and a good attitude toward learning; and rigorous attention to each student's intellectual and social growth.

Class size is an important factor not only for students but for teachers. If we want to attract and keep strong, rigorous, able teachers, then we must ensure conditions under which they can do a thorough job and be successful — and then hold them to a high standard.

Of course, class size is a money issue, but the nation now seems willing to pay for quality. Finally, class size is a vital part of a program that can lead to improved student learning and effective teacher effort.

If you would like further information about the effects class size has on students and teachers, please contact the National Council of Teachers of English or your state NCTE affiliate. We welcome your support for this vital reform.

Sincerely,

Second Annual Trends and Issues Statements — NCTE Commissions and Standing Committees

Compiled by Charles Suhor and Michael Spooner, NCTE

At the 1983 Denver convention, the NCTE Commissions and Standing Committees informally discussed trends and issues in their various fields. Because those groups include some of the most forward-looking members of the profession, their ideas (published in *Council-Grams*, March, 1984) were received with considerable interest. The commissions and standing committees conducted similar discussions at the Detroit Convention in November, 1984, and the results are summarized below. While the ideas do not constitute official positions of NCTE or the groups themselves, the 1984 trends and issues reports again provide stimulating and challenging viewpoints. Key phrases from the reports are italicized.

COMMISSION ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The Commission on the English Language (James C. Stalker, Director) applauds two *major developments in lexicography:* the projected publication of Volume I of the *Dictionary of American Regional English,* and a plan for entering the entire *Oxford English Dictionary* into computer module form. The Commission is also very glad to see the continued development of *collaborative research* involving classroom teachers — a movement that insures that research is put to use in schools.

Other developments are viewed with misgiving, in particular the *narrow applications of computers* in teaching English. Computers are being used as electronic workbooks and drill masters rather than as tools which ease the difficulties of rewriting and editing. This promotes the idea that language study is the study of grammar and the acquisition of standard English — a view which ignores research in sociolinguistic variation. A related problem is the increasingly *negative, uninformed beliefs about bilingual education.*

The Commission laments the increasing demand for *more formalized testing* of both students and teachers. Since student performance on standardized tests of language is only distantly related to their abilities to perform in actual situations, their test scores should be used with extreme care. Yet students take more tests and teachers teach to those tests, thus trivializing the language curriculum.

In part, these tests stem from recent *demands for common curriculum* — a trend which ignores, indeed denies, the language differences among children. This trend is related to the newly emerging de-emphasis on oral language development. Language proficiency is again becoming synonymous with the reading and writing ability, particularly in elementary schools. Ultimately, these problems reflect a continuing *misunderstanding of what constitutes quality* in education. Current views of quality narrow the curriculum to content that is measurable and to a concern with time-on-task, which emphasizes quantity rather than quality.

Three important problems are at a fairly high level of abstraction. 1) The continuing *research focus on meta-analysis* stresses quantifiable data, to the exclusion of qualitative studies. 2) Although *cross-disciplinary studies* often provide fruitful data on language, some researchers are inadequately trained in fields from which they borrow methodologies. (E.g., historians, sociologists, and anthropologists are inclined to broaden the term "literacy" to mean "any and all interactions with print.") 3) Some *educational terms are being misused* and broadened to the extent that they mean nothing, or even acquire the opposite of their original meanings. An example is the term "whole language." Contrary to its original focus on the centrality of meaning and the interdependence of language systems, the term has become trendy and is now applied, for example, to phonics programs.

COMMISSION ON LITERATURE

The Commission on Literature (Darwin T. Turner, Director) found fewer reasons for satisfaction than for anxiety. Three positive trends were identified. 1) The *increased prominence of storytelling* in English curricula suggests greater respect for oral literature as an art form. The literature of the world originated in the oral tradition. In a sense, failure to recognize oral literature is a refusal to acknowledge the history of literature. The trend suggests that a broader historical and cultural perspective is being achieved. 2) *Literary texts for very young children have improved dramatically,* apparently in response to mass market demands for higher quality and as a result of competition among publishers, authors and illustrators to meet that demand. 3) Texts of the classics are being reissued for younger students in particularly attractive formats.

Despite some positive trends, the status of literature in education has been diminished by hostility, bigotry, ignorance, indifference, and neglect on the part of pressure groups. If the current increase in censorship continues, eventually the only literature permitted in the classroom will be so bland and benign that it could not reflect the actual world in which students live. A related concern is the *decline of pluralistic themes* in literary texts; and in the past three years, racial minorities have virtually disappeared from children's literature.

The *current emphasis on excellence* in education and on implementation of various reform reports gives little consideration to the needs of literary study. Models for teacher-effectiveness programs stress mastery of materials

by the end of a lesson. Such expectations are invalid for literary study, where emphasis is on the development of thought processes rather than acquisition of facts. Last year the Commission noted that reform proposals called for little emphasis on preparation in teaching literature. This year the Commission expanded its concern, noting that *emphasis is placed on teaching reading comprehension rather than on responses to literature.* These signs suggest a general belief that literature is relatively inconsequential and that there are no problems related to the teaching of it.

The Commission is disturbed by the increased use of *computer software in the teaching of literature.* Whereas technological aids have supplementary value, they should not be used to replace the practice of reading literature.

The Commission reiterates its concern about *mandated uses of anthologies and standard textbooks* in the classroom. The trend towards a standard literary canon gives teachers less opportunity to use diverse literary works. In addition, the Commission regards with alarm the trend in many districts to *misassign individuals not trained primarily as librarians or as teachers of literature* to those positions, where they are given the responsibility of selecting books and guiding students in literature.

COMMISSION ON COMPOSITION

The Commission on Composition (Charles I. Schuster, Director) discussed issues in six major categories: teacher-training; the relation between theory, research and practice; forms and purposes of school writing; testing; computers; and literacy.

Commission members agreed that strong objective and comprehensive *studies on educating teachers in the teaching of writing are needed.* A number of models for this training have been developed, but there has been little effort to describe and differentiate those models. Several members stressed the need for school-based training of teachers of other subjects who have been assigned to teach writing.

The Commission expressed concern about the *gap between theories of composition* espoused in NCTE sessions and publications, *and the curriculum prescriptions* contained in materials published for students. Members also agreed that attention should be paid to *broadening the purposes of writing done in school.* The common assumption is that we are training students to become capable academic writers. However, composition courses at all levels can include personal and business letters, memos, narratives, reflections, expressive responses and the like.

The Commission opposed the *current proliferation of testing.* Tests take time away from instruction and often encourage practices that are less than ideal. While the Commission is moderately heartened by signs that English achievement *tests are beginning to include writing samples,* the test topics remain problematic, and usually no time is allowed for revision. Members further expressed concern about the perceived move from general impression scoring of writing samples toward the old-style checklists containing discrete items.

Commission members pointed to *methods for evaluating educational software and hardware.* They strongly agreed that word processors are no substitute for teachers. "We don't want legislatures to spend money on word processors at the expense of salaries and inservice education for teachers," one member said. In support of this, members downplayed the "revolution in literacy" expected in some quarters due to the advent of computers and word processors. In one members' view, the new technology will have an effect no greater than the advent of the typewriter, ". . .not a negligible effect, perhaps, but certainly nothing of sci-fi, Armageddon proportions."

COMMISSION ON READING

The Commission on Reading (Dorothy J. Watson, Director) was deeply concerned about the profession's *failing efforts to encourage holistic and meaning-making approaches* to students and their language. We need to root our strategies for teaching reading in a psychology that does not see reading or any language act as an isolated behavior, but rather as a part of general capacity to represent and interpret our experiences symbolically. Understanding of the reading process is thwarted by a mechanistic view that generally assumes that everything consists of independent, separately identifiable parts that can be recombined into successively larger wholes — until one reaches the ultimate whole. Such a reductionist view leads to a "skills" approach to reading. A related concern is the notion held by many in our profession — including some researchers and publishers — that beginning reading is qualitatively different or separate from comprehension.

Our failed efforts toward holistic literacy programs are illustrated by the *education of out-of-school/unemployed adults.* GED and ABE materials are mainly drill/skill, anti-holistic, and anti-meaning-making. There is a need for new kinds of materials that support teacher re-education and relate to interests of discouraged students. Holistic curricula are also frustrated by the *continuing impact of standardized tests.* The negative influence of testing on curriculum makes it necessary to disseminate information on whole language teaching/assessment to parents, school boards, administrators and *all* teachers. The Commission notes the *lack of information immediately available to the larger group of teachers.* It seems that the small "cutting edge" group of teachers is characteristically many years ahead of the majority of professionals. Among those who should be aware of new knowledge are teachers in content areas.

Nevertheless, there is a slight movement toward a transactional, holistic model of language learning and curriculum. A growing network of individuals and teacher support groups is working with holistic approaches. The Commission believes that these professionals should be recognized and their efforts empowered with endorsement and commendation.

Another issue is *reading in broader contexts* than the printed page. We need to help society go beyond the media events to understand and judge

information. A related matter is the *lack of good computer software*. Most language arts material resembles workbooks, requiring single word answers or multiple choice selections. This is incompatible with our priority — active language use. Finally, the descriptive potential and *power of semiotic inquiry* into the reading process and reading instruction was mentioned as an issue that needed attention.

COMMISSION ON MEDIA

The Commission on Media (David England, Director) focused strongly on three matters: teacher preparation, computers, and fragmentation of knowledge. Of immediate concern was the *status of the media preparation of teachers*. Commission members agreed that teachers are not being well prepared to deal with media in any way in the classroom.

Regarding the status of *computers in the classroom*, the Commission continues to see danger in the current idea that "we-must-get-computers-for-the-sake-of-getting-computers." However, the profession is showing increased interest in the informed use of computers, and teachers are attempting to direct the course of software development.

The trend in curriculum toward *segmenting knowledge* was of great concern. The Commission notes the decline of team-teaching approaches and the integration of media into English/language arts instruction. This trend reduces students' understanding of the interconnections among various branches of knowledge; fuller use of media would help to integrate experience for students.

The Commission also discussed the *uses of video in legal processes*; the *image of the teaching profession that students see in TV and movies*; and *censorship* of nonprint media. Teachers and the teaching profession are not being portrayed positively by the media; therefore, young people may see teaching as an even less attractive career than other factors, such as salary, would already have dictated. The use of media — from computer tapes to videotapes — in the legal system is increasing and raises a number of moral and ethical issues. Finally, consistent with the Commission's previous alarm over censorship of mass media, it was agreed that teachers need to be awakened to the many materials available to interpret their use of potentially controversial media materials to parents, school boards, and administrators.

COMMISSION ON CURRICULUM

The Commission on Curriculum (Eileen Lundy, Director) identified five categories of trends and issues. The first was the need to *integrate the teaching of the language arts at all levels*. At the elementary level, this means reuniting reading instruction and teacher-education with speaking, listening, writing, and observation. At secondary and college levels, it means reuniting the study of literature with other language arts. At all levels, it means addressing the interrelationship of the language arts with growth

in critical thinking. Members suggested that the work done in communications (particularly in oral interpretation of literature) provides links between speaking, performance, and understanding of literature. In line with this, English educators at all levels need to recognize the place of speaking in the language arts curriculum. Finally, members saw the growth of writing-across-the-curriculum as a pedagogically sound trend.

The second category centered around *the place of the humanities* in a well-rounded education. Current state- and district-level *emphases on testing* militate against the development of humanities curricula. *Censorship* of literature and textbooks also pushes the humanities to the side. In many states, *less money is being dedicated to library books* for schools and colleges. In two-year colleges, overemphasis on vocational preparation often leads to neglect of the humanities. In elementary schools, the emphasis on handwriting, spelling, and grammar often leaves little time for literature, oral language activities, and composition. Video and film are being used in schools and colleges, but such use remains qualitatively unexamined from the standpoint of influence on the acquisition of knowledge and the study of literature. Another related trend is the recent *call for a return to a core curriculum*. Some members pointed to the difficulty of defining the content of such a core. Others contrasted the call for core programs with the call for better *development of students' critical thinking, reading, and writing abilities*. The core curriculum idea, like the notion of "cultural literacy," proposes a *product* of the curriculum; the critical thinking idea designates the *processes* we want our students to be able to use. Curricula in which the two are wedded successfully need to be developed.

The third cluster of issues was *legislative interference in the formation of curriculum*. State-mandated testing and legislatively imposed curricula focus mainly on minimal competencies for students and teachers. As a result, complex problems are reduced to simplistic questions with simplistic answers. This creates a widening gap between what educators know from research and what they are permitted to do in practice. *Textbook-centered and test-driven curricula* discourage creative planning and often result in heavy teaching loads, over-enrolled classes, and growing demands for paper work. Legislative interference is an attempt to raise standards; yet this trend promises to lead to increasing numbers of dropouts at the secondary level.

The fourth category was problems of *teacher preparation*. These include the use and often the *exploitation of part-time or adjunct instructors* in English at college levels, and the *hiring and continued service of teachers unprepared to teach English* at secondary and elementary levels. The commission further noted the *loss of well-prepared, well-educated candidates* to other professions and the *"greying" of present faculty*. Several members also spoke of *poor education of many public school administrators — not referring to lack of degrees, but to the low quality and narrowness of education. Finally, the fifth area of concern was the continued need to seek racial and sexual equality* in the staffing of schools and colleges and in the treatment of students.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH

The Standing Committee on Research (Kenneth Kantor, Chair) discussed issues in four related areas: policy issues, testing and evaluation, needed research, and teacher education. Questions of policy were mainly related to *educational reform proposals* and the response of the research community to those proposals. It was suggested that a usable synthesis of research findings, tied to the realities of the reform movement, be developed. Specifically, we need to consider what we know about effective language arts instruction and make the knowledge available to legislators and other policy-makers. A further specific concern was relationship of the movement for "excellence" to educational equity.

The issue of the *extent to which assessment drives instruction* was raised. There is a need both to reduce the negative effects of skills testing and to create instruments that more accurately measure reading, writing, and thinking processes. The committee was also concerned about the use of certain outcome measures in *assessing teaching effectiveness*. Much of the "time on task" research fails to comment on the nature and quality of the tasks under consideration. How, for example, is time for writing being spent, and how might it be better spent?

The Committee identified *needed areas of further research* as response to and teaching of literature, reading-writing connections, uses of computer technology, and cognitive processes involved in language development. Additionally, there was a call for contextual studies which consider literacy in its broadest sense, taking social, cultural, political, and historical as well as psychological factors into account. Such investigations require an interdisciplinary stance and close cooperation among scholars in the psychology, sociology, linguistics, rhetoric, philosophy, and literary and other theories.

Finally, the Committee discussed research and teacher education, and the need for *classroom practices which reflect the insights of research*. One member cited the need to study the effects of inservice projects, particularly looking at how teachers with internalized strategies respond to innovative ideas. Another cited the importance of examining models of teacher education involving collaborative learning. Relatedly, several members expressed support for the idea of teacher as researcher, at the same time citing the need to define the role more carefully.

STANDING COMMITTEE AGAINST CENSORSHIP

The Standing Committee Against Censorship (Lee Burress, Chair) notes that national attention was given recently to the removal of *Huckleberry Finn* from use in the Waukegan, Illinois, school system. Similar publicity appeared when three books by Judy Blume, *Deenie*, *Blubber*, and *Then Again Maybe I Won't*, were removed from the Peoria, Illinois, school libraries. The books were returned later on a restricted basis. Undoubtedly similar events occurred throughout the United States with less publicity.

With regard to censorship pressures of this sort, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

A second issue of significance was the decision by Judge Sarah Evans Barker concerning the *anti-pornography ordinance* of Indianapolis, Indiana. The judge said that the ordinance, which defined pornography as a form of discrimination against women, violated the First Amendment. The ordinance concerns education because, if found constitutional, it would restrain with considerable severity a variety of materials currently found in public school libraries, including *Ms Magazine* and *Our Bodies, Ourselves.*

A third issue is public awareness of the degree to which *school texts are currently emended or bowdlerized by major publishers.* The Minneapolis public schools, Richmond public schools, and others have recently become aware of this problem. A resolution passed by NCTE at the Detroit meeting deals with this matter.